maximum rocknroll

march 2007

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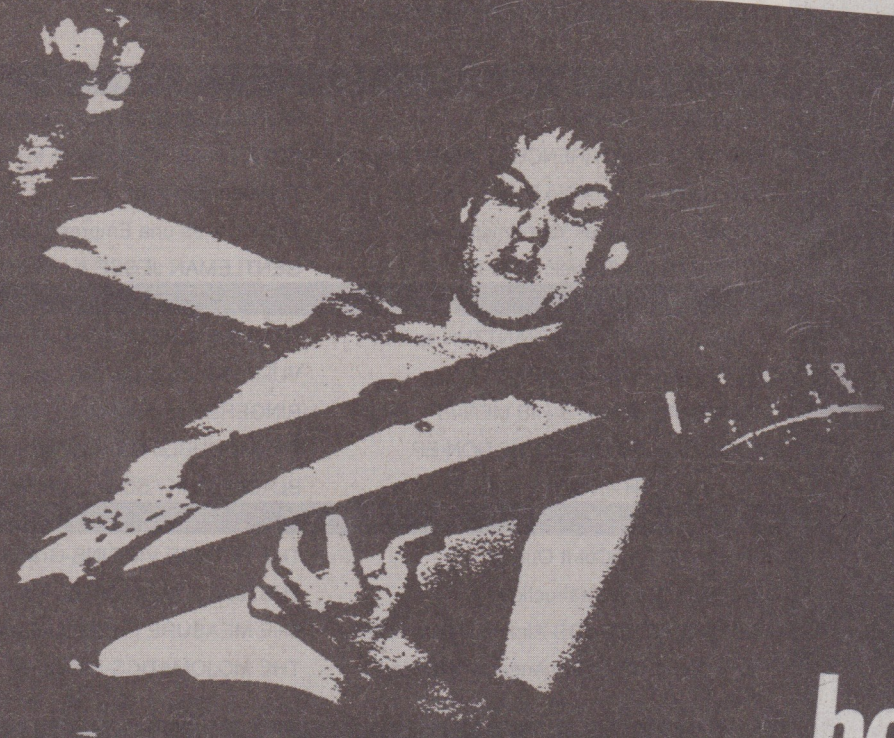

holy shit!

plus: 2006 year-end best of.
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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
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See page 4 for pricing and other info.

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- LOWER CLASS BRATS-The New Seditionaries-LP
- SO MUCH HATE-How We Feel-LP
- BRASSKNUCKLE BOYS/DEADLINE-Can't Be Beaten-CD
- THE VICIOUS-Alienated-LP
- THE FELT UPS-Feel Me Up-12"
- WORLD BURNS TO DEATH-Totalitarian Sodomy-LP
- INTELLECTUALS-Invisible Is The Best-LP
- V/A-No Bulshit Vol 2-EP
- SOCIAL CIRCKLE-Static Eyes-EP
- NEON MANIACS-Nothing's Safe-EP

MITCH CARDWELL

- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-I Don't Wanna Know-EP
- NASAL BOYS-Lost And Found-LP
- BLACK SUNDAY-Cut It Out-45
- THE BLACK AND WHITES-You're the Only Girl-EP
- NUMBSKULL-LP
- THE CANNIBALS-Suburban Sex-7" EP
- THE YOUTHS-Decontrol-EP
- THOMAS FUNCTION-Insignificants-EP
- GIZMOS-Live 2xCD
- PETS-live

ROB COONS

- THE VICIOUS-Alienated-LP
- AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE/IRON LUNG-split EP
- TOTALITÄR-EP / V/A-No Bulshit Vol 2-EP
- AGE-The Spider Rules Your Emotions-EP
- SOCIAL CIRCKLE-Static Eyes-EP
- WORLD BURNS TO DEATH-Totalitarian Sodomy-LP
- ROTTEN SOUND-Consume to Contaminate-LP
- TDK-Carnevision-LP
- TDK-Esto es una Empresa Capitalista-LP
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP

PAUL CURRAN

- AFGANISTAN YE-YE'S/ERANTZUN-split EP
- THE FUTURE VIRGINS-EP
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP
- RADON-CD / THOMAS FUNCTION-EP
- KOHU-63/ WITH ANGER – split LP
- THE MEASURE [SA]-Union Pool-EP
- VULPESS-Me Gusta Ser Una Zorra /Inkisición-45
- RINGERS-Lame Jokes and Sneers -45
- THEE DOUBLE D'S-Dillybar/Groce Out!-45
- BLACK FORK / SOCIAL UNREST-live at Gilman!

JONATHAN FLOYD

- BLACK SUNDAY-Cut It Out-45
- DEADFALL-Mass Destruction-CD
- BILLY REESE PETERS-Almost Heaven-CD
- THE MONIKERS-Fallen Angels/Absolute-45
- RADON-Metric Buttloads of Rock-CD
- THE FUTURE VIRGINS-Gravity-EP
- THE BLACK AND WHITES-You're the Only Girl-EP
- THE MEASURE [sa]-Union Pool-EP
- THE MOJOMATICS-Songs for Faraway-CD
- LES HATEPINKS-Tete Malade: Sick in the Head-CD

LAYLA GIBBON

- VULPESS-Me Gusta Ser Una Zorra/Inkisición-EP
- NASAL BOYS-Lost And Found-LP
- BLACK SUNDAY-Cut It Out-45
- TDK-Esto es una Empresa Capitalista-LP
- RAPPRESAGLIA-LP / NUMBSKULL-12"
- THE TERMINALS-Forget About Never-LP
- THOMAS FUNCTION-Insignificants-EP
- THE BLACK AND WHITES-EP
- NEON MANIACS-Radio Act/Crazy World-45
- MIKA MIKO-Business Cats Video

CHRIS HUBBARD

- NUMBSKULL-Final Days of Torture-LP
- THE VICIOUS-Alienated-12"
- SOCIAL CIRCLE-Static Eyes-EP
- GENTLEMEN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP
- TOTALITÄR-Vi Är Eliten-EP
- V/A-No Bullshit Vol. 2-EP
- BASTARD-Wind of Pain-LP
- TDK-Esto Es Una Empresa Capitalista-LP
- REPERCUSSIONS-CD of upcoming 12"
- PELIGRO SOCIAL-live

KENNY KAOS

- THEE DOUBLE D'S-Dillybar/Groce Out!-45
- THE BELLRAYS-Les Comichons/You Got the Power-45
- THE STRANGER-Prison Called Life-EP
- THE DIRECTORS/THE LAST KILLERS-split EP
- NEON MANIACS-Radio Act/Crazy World-45
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP
- THE MAKEOUTS-Worst Band Ever-EP
- INTELLECTUALS-Invisible Is The Best-LP
- NIKKI SUDDEN-The Truth Doesn't Matter-2xLP
- THE BLACK AND WHITES-You're the Only Girl-EP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

CAROLYN KEDDY

- INTELLECTUALS-Invisible Is The Best-LP
- THEE DOUBLE D'S-Dillybar/Groce Out!-45
- NEON MANIACS-Radio Act/Crazy World-45
- THE FELT UPS-Feel Me Up-12"
- THE VICIOUS-ALIENATED-LP
- THE BLACK AND WHITES-EP
- THE YOUTHS-Decontrol-EP
- THE CANNIBALS-Suburban Sex-7"EP
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP
- THE HICKOIDS-Corn Demon-CD

WILL KINSER

- WORLD BURNS TO DEATH-LP / TDK-LP
- THE VICIOUS-ALIENATED-LP / LA PIOVRA-Risacca-EP
- ROTTEN FUX-Surgeon-EP / TOTALITÄR-EP
- MUGRE-It Ends Now-EP / LA UVI-Ya Esta Bien-EP
- ARMAGEDOM/BOMBENALARM-split EP
- WARKRIME-Give War a Chance-EP
- ESKORBUTO-Mucha Policia, Poca Diversión-EP
- VULPESS-EP / BASTARD-Wind of Pain-LP
- CRASS-Demos 1977-79-LP / RAPPRESAGLIA-LP
- AMEN 81-2XLP / FADER WAR-EP

RAY LUJAN

- THE 20 BELOWS-Headaches And Moodswings-CD
- THE JENNIFER ECHO-Be Dangerous On Rock Guitar-CD
- THE FUTURE VIRGINS-Gravity-EP
- WEDNESDAY NIGHT HEROES-Move To Press-EP
- RADON-Metric Buttloads of Rock-CD
- BLACK SUNDAY-45 / NAKATOMI PLAZA -Unsettled-CD
- MONIKERS-Eat Your Young-CD / THE FELT UPS-12"
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP / THE VISITORS-CD
- BRASSKNUCKLE BOYS/DEADLINE-CD
- DAS OATH/AMPHERE -split CD

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

- THE FOCUS-Between The White And The Red-EP
- THOMAS FUNCTION-Insignificants-EP
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP
- DOWN AND OUTS-Minneapolis-EP
- SOCIAL CIRCKLE-EP / THE FUTURE VIRGINS-EP
- THE VICIOUS-LP/ THEE DOUBLE D'S-45
- THE CANNIBALS-Suburban Sex-7"EP
- NIKKI SUDDEN-The Truth Doesn't Matter-2xLP
- WHISKEY SUNDAY-Sunshine-EP
- RINGERS-Lame Jokes and Sneers/Walking Ghosts-45

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

- TOTALITÄR-Vi Är Eliten-EP
- GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN-EP
- LA UVI-EP / VULPESS-EP / ESKORBUTO-EP
- SOCIAL CIRCKLE-Static Eyes-EP
- THOMAS FUNCTION-Insignificants EP
- NUMBSKULL-12" / RAPPRESAGLIA-LP
- ROTTEN FUX-Surgeon-EP
- TDK-Esto Es Una Empresa Capitalista-LP
- VI GRUER OSS-Kjell Magne Bondesvik-EP
- BLACK FORK / SOCIAL UNREST-Live @ Gilman

BRUCE ROEHRS

- LOWER CLASS BRATS-LP / THE SKUDS-Millions of Dead-EP
- DEMOLITION-Mob of Wolves-LP
- BRODY'S MILITIA/NUNSLAUGHTER-split EP
- AGE-EP / SOCIAL CIRCKLE-EP
- V/A-No Bullshit Vol 2-EP / TOTALITÄR-EP
- CRASHED OUT/TEMPLARS-split 45
- KOHU-63/RED WITH ANGER-split LP
- VI GRUER OSS-Kjell Magne Bondesvik-EP
- AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE/IRON LUNG-split EP
- FORCED MARCH-Wasted Existence-EP

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY – *NEW TOP TEN!!*

- ESKORBUTO-Mucha Policia, Poca Diversion-EP
- INSOLENTES / TRAS DE NADA-split EP
- THE VICIOUS-Alienated-LP
- FADER WAR-Norway Hardcore-EP
- VI GRUER OSS-Kjell Magne Bondesvik-EP
- TOTALITÄR-Vi Är Eliten-EP
- MUGRE-It Ends Now-EP
- RAPPRESAGLIA-1981-1983-LP
- ROTTEN FUX-Surgeon-EP
- STRAIGHTJACKET NATION/PISSCHRIST-live

ZINE TOP TEN

- *Equalizing Distort vol. 6, no. 8*
- *From Idle hands the Devil's Work #3*
- *King Cat Comics #67*
- *Move Your Ass cislo 14, vyslo 16*
- *No Quarter #1*
- *Radiation Sickness #2*
- *Rat Charge #8*
- *Rocktober #43*
- *Take Your Shot #3*
- *You Can Work Any Hundred Hours a Week*

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity. "Education" theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Blueboods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid zine, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatalify, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06, Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

#285/February '07. Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Piovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

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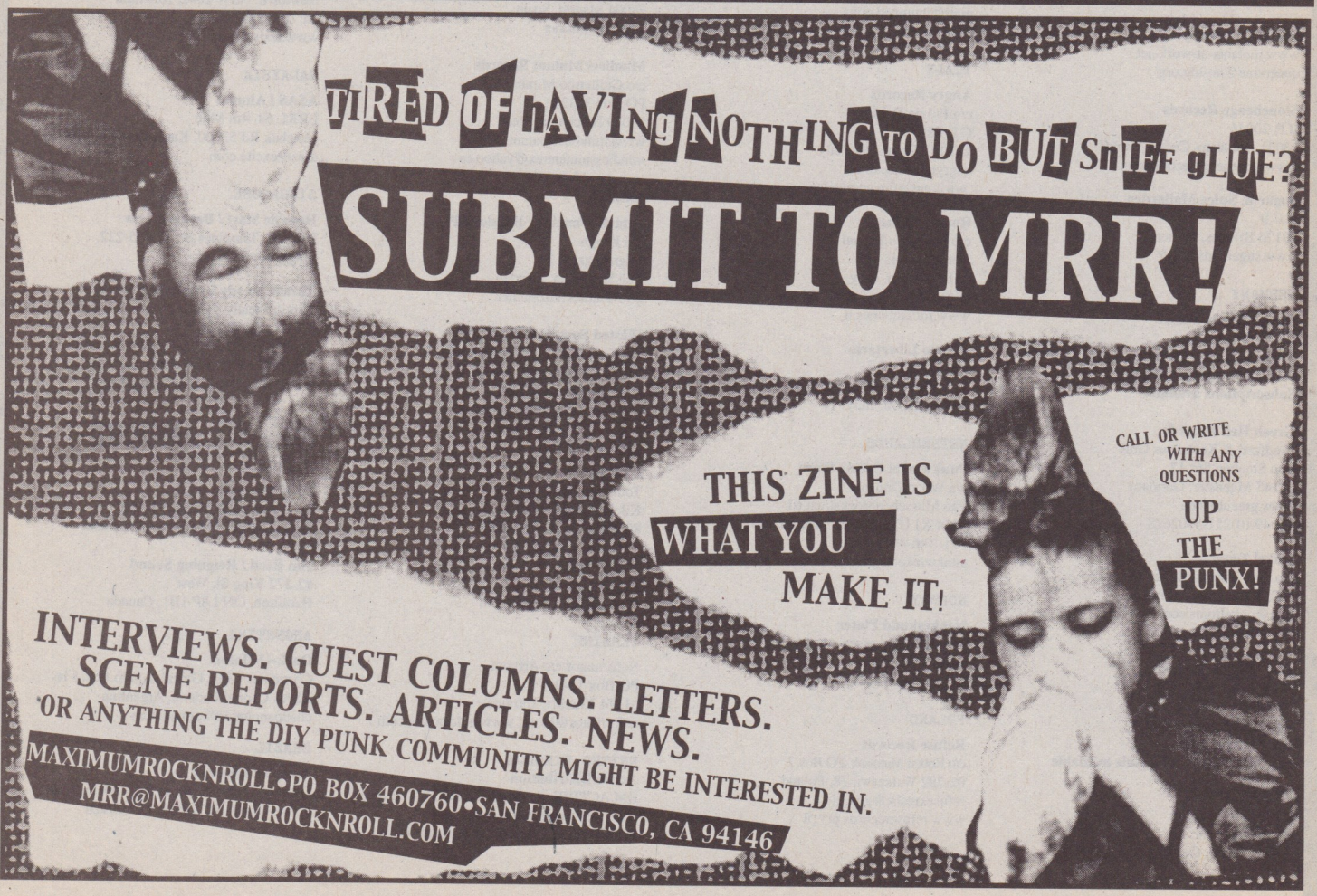

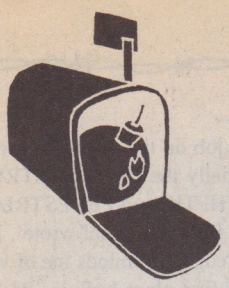

LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

MRR & Todd Tadsmore—

I didn't respond to Todd's initial letter in *MRR* for two reasons. First, his letter was really more about Lisa's contribution in *MRR* and not really about something I had said or done in these pages. Second, I don't really care if he loves or hates Ebullition. I didn't start Ebullition to be loved, admired, hated, or loathed. I have always done Ebullition because it was what I wanted to do, and no matter what I do someone will hate me so there really isn't much point in wasting breath defending Ebullition. However, now that Ryan from Punks Before Profits has come to our defense and Todd has written a second letter, I feel that I should write something in response.

I will start by saying that Ebullition and *HeartattaCk* were always two different things. I realize that I was always involved with both, as was Lisa, but nevertheless they were different entities in my opinion. I am a complex person, and I am capable of following two different threads at once. My goals with *HeartattaCk* and Ebullition were often different, and sometimes even conflicting. For instance, I have always hated advertising and have tried to restrict Ebullition's advertisments to simple lists, which I feel is a less offensive form of advertising. In the seventeen years that Ebullition has been in operation I have done less than 75 ads (50 of those being in *HeartattaCk*). Now that *HeartattaCk* is over I will probably never do another ad for Ebullition. At the same time I spent twelve years trying to get labels to run ads in *HeartattaCk*. I hate advertising. I hate what it is about and what it represents, but it was a necessary evil for running *HeartattaCk*.

As Todd points out, *HeartattaCk* would not review anything with printed barcodes on the package, while Ebullition will sometimes distribute the very same items. I hate barcodes. I have never used them to sell anything. We do not use them at Ebullition and we do not use them on our releases. With *HeartattaCk* I needed a very fair way to discriminate against music that did not belong in the magazine. By refusing to review anything that used a printed barcode we could effectively create a very fair and consistent method of eliminating 99% of all the shit that was not hardcore that came for review. It was a simple rule and it was not someone arbitrarily or subjectively deciding what is or isn't hardcore. Ebullition doesn't need a fair rule. If I don't like something I just don't carry it. I don't need to be fair. I pretty much ignore barcodes at Ebullition. As I said, we don't use them in anyway. I reject hundreds and hundreds of releases for distribution through Ebullition each year. I do it for many reasons: I don't like it, I find it offensive, I think it looks stupid, I think it is too corporate, I don't like the person/company that released it, blah, blah, blah… my reasons are my reasons and they are *very* subjective.

Perhaps having two different objectives and methods of achieving those objectives seems hypocritical, but it made sense to me. Personally, I don't cringe at the idea of being hypocritical. Being 100% consistent 100% of the time is pretty near impossible. I have been vegan for 19 years, but if I am standing in line at the bank and they have free cookies I will eat one. I have been straight edge for over 23 years, but when I am sick I will use NyQuil to get me through the night (NyQuil has alcohol in it). Does this make me a hypocrite? Sure. Does it invalidate my views or my commitment to those views? No.

As for Todd's criticisms of Ebullition. He is right. Ebullition does carry some metal releases and we do carry a wide selection of punk and hardcore. I think he exaggerates this fact and his remark that "Ebullition carries every flavor of the month punk record" would ring false to the hundreds of bands and labels that we reject each year. On any given day we have approximately 2,500 releases in stock. Less than 100 of those are actual metal records, though I am not sure what qualifies as metal these days as a lot of crust, grind, and hardcore sounds like metal to me. Depending on your definition of metal this number could be higher, but certainly no higher than 250 or 300 releases. He mentions that we carry Alternative Tentacles releases, but the truth is that we carry less than 20 of the 300+ different releases on Alternative Tentacles. I am very picky. I only get the titles I want or think that our hardcore based customers care about.

Ebullition remains a hardcore record distribution. We remain DIY and relatively small. We have never been larger than three people, and are currently only two people. We carry hardcore. Yes, we will carry some other releases here and there as long as we can get them from every day kinds of people. The largest distributors that we buy from are Lumberjack/Mordam and Revelation. Nothing larger than that. For the most part we deal with small labels operating out of people's bedrooms and living rooms. Our emphasis is and always has been on very small DIY labels.

In the last couple of years we started carrying some metal because a few DIY metal labels contacted us. Nuclear War Now is the biggest metal label we carry. Personally, I don't really care for metal. I am just not interested. However, Yosuke that runs the label is just a guy doing a label that he loves, running it out of his house. He does his label out of passion for the music, not out of greed. I can't see any harm in helping him out. It doesn't detract from our focus on hardcore. We also get some metal releases from Deep Six, which is clearly a hardcore record label. Deep Six trades with metal labels and then brings his trades to us, and then we try to sell them for him. He brings us a lot of stuff I wouldn't order on my own, but I like Bob and if I can help him out then I am going to help him out.

Ebullition is about hardcore. It will always be about hardcore. I don't care about any other music. If hardcore comes to an end then Ebullition comes to an end. But this doesn't mean that we can't carry some different stuff along the way. We have never lost our focus. Hardcore for the hardcore.

And finally, I wanted to address Todd's comments about our mail order service. Todd had mentioned that it was bullshit that we have a two-item minimum. The problem is that Ebullition is based in California, and an expensive part of California at that. I wouldn't pay anyone less than $10 an hour to work here, anything less than that would be an insult. When kids order one 7" record Ebullition will make 25¢ to 30¢ so we would need to do at least 40 mail orders an hour just to cover wages, not to mention insurance, rent, payroll taxes, and other expenses. Doing 40 mail orders an hour is impossible. I actually lose money on every single mail order that is less than $20. I switched to a two-item minimum so that I wouldn't have to raise our prices across the board. This may be a moot point, as there is a very good chance that Ebullition will soon stop doing mail order. It simply isn't cost effective and I can't pay people a living wage to do the mail order. Mail order sales represent less than 3% of our annual sales while those same sales represent 20% of Lisa's workload. Mail order has been losing money for over six years, but we have kept doing it because we wanted to make sure kids had access. There are now so many online mail order services that it doesn't really seem that important to me. Time will tell.

Anyway, I didn't want to try to change anyone's mind about Ebullition. Everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. I know Ebullition isn't per-

fect. It never will be. I simply do what I think is right and I make compromises when I have to. I know I have made some bad choices. I know I have made some mistakes. But I think the overall direction of Ebullition is positive. I think we have served the hardcore community in a positive way and I think we have done a pretty good job. I started Ebullition to help hardcore bands and hardcore labels. I think we have done that and continue to do that.

By the way, Todd, I am glad you picked up that *Give Me Back* LP comp. It is the one release on Ebullition that I am most proud of. I think it represents Ebullition at its best.
—Kent McClard

MRR—
Attention: Ungdomshuset has seized the airwaves of Copenhagen! Ungdomshuset, the long running squat and show space in Copenhagen, Denmark is in imminent danger of eviction, but we are keeping up the fight. One of the initiatives is a newly started pirate radio: Pirat Radio 69 on 101.8 FM in the Copenhagen area—there is a link for internet streaming at myspace.com/piratradio69

We started the radio on the 14th of December and are currently the longest running land based Pirate Radio in the history of Denmark. We reject the material bullshit of the commercial media, and will bring attention to the problems and issues regarding Ungdomshuset and give the youth of Copenhagen a voice on the airwaves. We have already had a user base of 100s of people and people have listened in the 1000s around the world.

It feels great to receive support mails and greetings from friends around the globe, and the support actions from everywhere are greatly appreciated.

We will stream Maximum Rocknroll from this station, but have lots of our own programs with punk, heavy metal, hip hop, dancehall, techno, radio plays, political discussions, and much more.

Please support our struggle to fight for our house and the youth of Copenhagen. You can follow the news and updates on www.ungdomshuset.info. Thank you for your support—the fight continues!!!
Pirat Radio 69
Ungdomshuset, Copenhagen

Hey MRR—
I have something I would like to say regarding the bands Government Warning and Rabies. Over the summer in 2006 I saw Rabies in Texas, and during the most recent This Is For You Fest in Daytona (December 2006), I saw Government Warning. During both of these events, each band acted very sketchy and homophobic. At the show in Texas, members of Rabies were throwing around the word "faggot" like it was going out of style, and after the band ANS played their song about Texas pride, one of the members remarked "that was the gayest thing I've ever seen." The singer from Government Warning also thought it would be fine to use the word "faggot" multiple times during their set at TIFY. I was at their show the next day in Raleigh, NC with my band on our tour and they covered a Vile song, a fucking openly racist band!

I'm definitely not ultra-PC, nor am I anti-PC, but stuff like that is just plain fucked and shouldn't be supported. Now, I'm not calling for a boycott of these bands or anything like that, I feel that people should make up their own minds on what they support, but I just felt this had to be known. These two bands are pretty popular in the punk scene right now, so maybe people think it's OK to look past shit like this, but I sure as hell don't.
—Zach Howard
chaosnonmusica@gmail.com

Dear MRR—
I am writing you this message because I am so sick and tired of these pay-to-play schemes. Last year, my band Vegetative State was scammed by a particular company called Concerts First. We were still a pretty green band and were totally oblivious to the shit they were serving us. First, they made us attend a meeting so that we could get tickets to sell (for $15!) and these really ugly corporate flyers. They said if we wanted to play, we had to sell a certain amount of tickets, and if we wanted to play the bigger venue, we had to sell an even more ridiculous amount. It was really hard to sell tickets because the prices were so high and most of the other bands were bad Fallout Boy cover bands. Plus, they bands get paid absolutely nothing, but instead get a chance to submit a demo to the beyond lame "indie" label Fueled by Ramen.

Once we got to the show, we were immediately stopped by some Concerts First tool at the door and asked for our ticket money—no hello or anything. When I was paying the guy, I was short two tickets' worth of money. I asked the guy if I could pay it later, but he coldly just said no, so I ended up having to pay $30 out of my own pocket! To add to the filth, they gave us a five-second sound check, and wouldn't even let us finish our set list, which wasn't very long.

A couple months later, they call me to try and get Vegetative State to do some more shows so that they could scam us again. I politely said no thank you and that I was not interested, and hung up. A couple of seconds later the lady who called me, called me back and said in a really threatening manner to "Get some manners."

Just because you think I'm dumb teenager, doesn't give you the right to shit all over me. This is a warning to all bands: don't get involved with Concerts First, Emergenza, Big Time Productions, or any other of these scams. I don't want anybody else to get screwed like we did.
—Tim Anstine
Columbus, OH
P.S. The Feelers kick ass!

MRR—
Great job on the new CD. It rules! Especially the tracks by STRUNG UP, NHFTK, and PEDESTRIANS. I also like what Ariel wrote . Even though I'm straight edge, it reminds me of why I got into punk in the first place back in '84. Like Paul Curran, the first MRR comp was one of my first punk records and it changed my life (for the better or worse). I'd say better. Hopefully this new comp will change some new kids' lives for the better as well. Thanks and keep up the good work!
—Spike

Dear MRR—
With regards to the Phantom Surfers letter in issue 285 regarding Lookout Records—I have to stand up for them. For every bad there must be a good. Our last sales statement in August 1999 with regards to money owed to Wat Tyler was –$429.31 and I told them never to get in touch again in case we had to pay them back. Luckily they haven't. What a bonus. Also, I'm still waiting from the label to give us the Silver Medal for being the second worst selling band on Lookout in their entire history. The Potatomen recieved Gold in case you are interested.
—Wat Tyler, aged fourteen and a half

MRR—
I am writing just to let folks know that the "punk poet" Vern the Carrot has died. He committed suicide in Devon at the age of 43, just before Christmas 2006.

Vern was a roadie for the Devon band the Cult Maniax, but was also known for his stand up poetry and support act for the likes of the Subhumans, Self Abuse, and Blyth Power in the West Country, Bristol, and beyond in the '80s.

People in the know and who saw his legendary live performances, could not forget "carrot wine" and the quite disgusting disappearing and reappearing "Mars Bar" trick, amongst others. You could say Vern was a British version of the late GG Allin. VERN THE CARROT RIP!
—Steve K. Leyton

Maxirockers and Gilman St. folx—
I went to Gilman for the first time and started reading *MRR* in the same year (1989), and I wanted to write in and say thanx a million for the many years of dedication and hard work that has given me so many years of *raaaad* memories and good fuckin times!!! I really appreciate it—whenever I get bummed out on my hometown scene (Sacramental, Cali) I just think about MRR and Gilman St. and I get all inspired and shit—who needs church!!! And may Gilman be around for another 20 fuckin' years—happy anniversary!!! And thanx for a "hella tight" show on Dec. 30th....yow!!!
—Ken Fury (Sacto FYBS)

FEBRUARY

Friday 16
Plan 9 • All Time Highs
Everything Must Go! • Meat of Mankind (CAN)
Slightly Less Than Nothing (WA)

Saturday 17
Society's Parasites (L.A.) • Static Thought
Gain To Lose

Friday 23 $7
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Lights Out • Verse (RI)
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Ceremony • Go It Alone (CAN)
Killing The Dream • The First Step
Hanover Saints • Another Breath

MARCH

Friday 02 $6
Verbal Abuse • A.D.T.
Eskapo • Tippers Gore (L.A.)
Warkrime • K-Bar

Friday 09
Behind Enemy Lines (PA) • Born/Dead
Bumbklaat (S.D.)

Saturday 10 $8
UGZ SPEED TRIALS
Insect Warfare (TX) • California Love
Wasteoid (NB) • Reagan SS (L.A.)
Noisear (NM) • Acts Of Sedition • Masacre

Friday 16 $6
This Is My Fist • Love Songs
Final Fight (L.A.) • Daggermouth (CAN)
Manville (ID)

Saturday 17
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Disaster Strikes (MA) • Surrender

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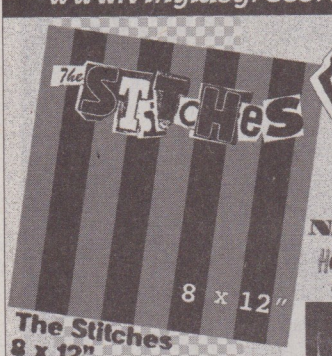

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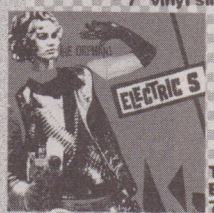

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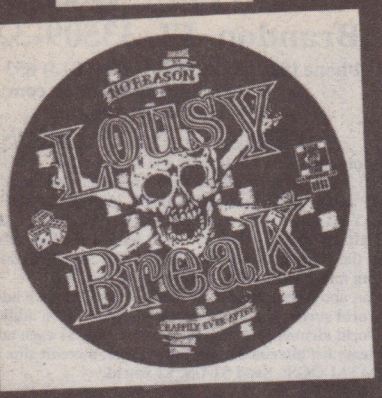

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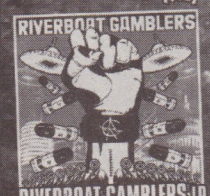

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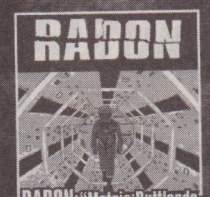

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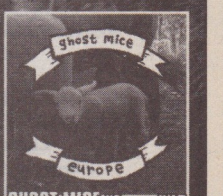

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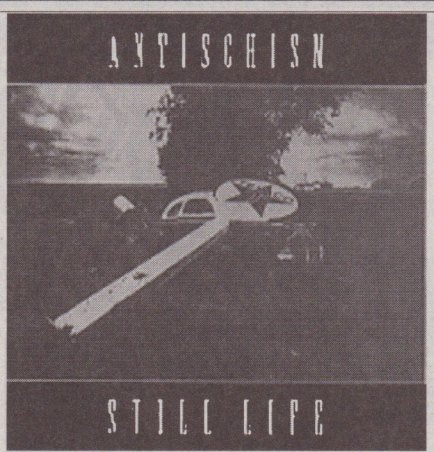

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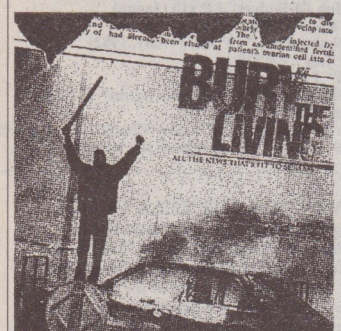

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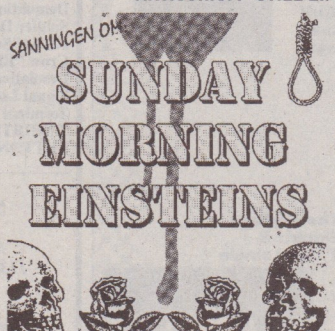

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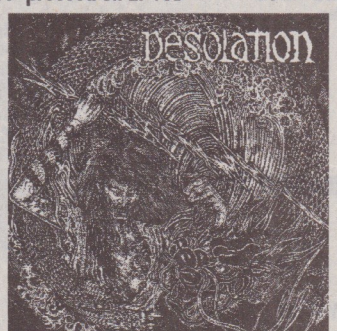

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COLUMNS

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What We Used To Do: Part One

We used to pick up everything off of the street. Sara took it a step or two farther by targeting things that were especially soggy and ominous. Not leftover useful things stacked on the sides of dumpsters, but things like wet pants that someone had probably scraped off. She made you feel elitist if you didn't immediately and cheerfully wear whatever she handed to you.

We walked around in packs of five or six, with six-packs, out by the ocean. We walked to the ocean from the Mission with a basketball, and when we passed a court we stopped and shot baskets. We lazed on the porches of condemned houses on busy streets until the cops came. Long days—where did they come from, and where did they go? We laced back and forth around the avenues in sneakers, in the thin summer air full of tiny drops of seawater.

It's winter, here in my first month of living in an apartment alone. I have a good job. In the corner stands an elegant old gunmetal file cabinet, my first. Traffic sounds outside, and the radiator gurgling steam. An apartment alone, where no one will fuck with your shit, however accidentally. Where you have control over when and where you work and wander, and in what state of undress. The promises are obvious. The danger is loneliness, tempered a little by the movements of the unheard neighbors in their boxes above and across.

Moving always shakes me to the core, although I never expect it to. Looking around me now, having just barely settled into a primitive order, it seems like moving again would be simple enough. Everything is sort of in boxes anyway. You forget that it's not about transferring things as they are—picking them up and setting them down somewhere else, but about transformations, moving objects into new spaces to understand them in different ways, and mostly it's about marking time. It's a forced reckoning with the things that identify you, from all eras of your life and times, often taken out of context and order. And it's not only a rearrangement of space and objects but also of relationships. The people who were our family.

This was the first time I moved into my own... empty room. I was reaching for a metaphor for that feeling, but thought of nothing better than an empty room, waiting to be filled with arrangements that no one else can be held accountable for. This may be adulthood. In any case, it makes me feel my age.

Other people's deaths age us, or our reactions to them. So does heartbreak, betrayal, and lack of sleep. But mostly people petrify instead of really aging—society expects this and reacts to it forgivingly. It's normal to grow emotionally flaccid, intellectually rigid, and thick around the neck. Rather than crafting personalities based on a growing understanding of ourselves, our origins, and our aspirations, people grab onto meaningless, cookie-cutter selves invented mostly by television. Selves that do not exist—like the self that is always cheerful, or the self that just doesn't like vegetables, sorry, never have, never will—or the class clown or whatever.

But if we work hard enough at it we don't turn to stone. We become more flexible, less uptight. In our movements grows some laughter at ourselves. Now Sara slaps maternally at your hand if you even cast an eye at a fine piece of merchandise on the street. She hunts with the same strange, cool eye up above the pavement, but not too far above, at estate sales and used furniture shops. We walk around in shorter loops, thinking of our warm beds and early mornings. But we still have plans, elaborate plans, for the things and people we find and keep.

Arwen, PO Box 170291, San Francisco, CA 94117

arwen@maximumrocknroll.com

Crying here it feels like strength

When my mother arrives to pick me up, it finally feels OK. She wants to know if I got her message, the one explaining that I can't be alone with my father because he might have a stroke. I say I got your message, and I would like to be alone with him. She says: that's not going to be possible.

I don't know what's possible, driving through pitch-dark suburbs that I don't even recognize until we get right near their house—did they always have those same lights at the end of the driveway? The trees are even bigger than I remember, driveway cracked in even more places.

Inside their house everything looks nicer and better kept than I remember. I can't go past the newly renovated cobalt blue kitchen, to that bed in the family room on the other side where my sister Lauren sits with her boyfriend Alex and the attendant, talking to my father. I walk around the other way, through the living room with a small marble café table in the corner that was my teenage dream for the room, next to the piano and a newer rug with a smaller, more elegant sofa. The hallways also look brighter, wood floors almost pulsating, except that the bathroom is identical: pink and green tiles, green tub, now it almost looks vintage in a claustrophobic sort of way.

Back in the other part of the house, Lauren and Alex come in the kitchen to hug hello and then I'm accidentally looking right at my father, so I go in the family room to stand there kind of frozen with my hand on my right hip. I can see myself seeing him, looking at him like I'm daring everything. Helen, the attendant, looks tense. Lauren isn't breathing, Alex looking up then down. My father opens his eyes, closes them. Opens

them, closes them. After it's clear that he's not going to say anything, I sit in one of the chairs, a leather lean-back recliner with a wooden pedestal that I guess is an updated version of the one they used to have. It's actually comfortable.

The knotted pine walls have been painted a gray color that my grandmother Rose called putty, the color she saw as the magic neutral-yet-sophisticated answer to too much white. The room looks more contemporary, the ceilings higher, and I realize that it's because the track lighting has been replaced with recessed lighting, and actually that's one of the reasons why all the rooms look better. I'm studying my father, gray hair receding somewhat but not tremendously considering his age and condition. He has the same pillow I have—the extra-soft foam one my mother got me. His even has a black pillowcase like the one I borrowed on my last book tour. Every now and then, my father gets agitated and his hands move around like they're part of a different person, Lauren asks, "Are you okay? Do you need something to drink?"

Lauren and Helen are watching *Survivor* and I glance over occasionally to glimpse various almost-naked athletic male bodies and women in bikinis—someone just lost something, and I guess people like this show because it's like porn.

Then Lauren switches the station and it's *Deal or No Deal*. She says, "Have you seen this?"

A bald-headed guy with a diamond earring says something and then 20 or maybe 30 smiling plastic model-type women in identical blue dresses and heels give serious synchronized runway with silver metal briefcases down a flight of stairs and the announcer says Hi ladies. Hi Howie, they all say at the same time, modeling pin-up compliance for a new generation. My sister's talking about how some show came on earlier about end-of-life issues and she didn't know whether to change the channel but she didn't want to be too obvious even though it was totally insensitive, they were talking about pulling the plug, but she just left the show on. As if on cue, a bald woman flashes on screen, something about how cancer is beautiful.

My mother comes in and brushes my father's hair back with her hand, then she's standing at the foot of the bed rubbing my father's legs and his hands are moving around, his face looks pained and Lauren says, what are you doing? He likes this, my mother says—I'm massaging his legs to stimulate him. Then she says to my father: Matthew's here and he looks around more animated: Oh, hi Matthew, how are you?

How am I? I don't know if I start crying right then or if it's later, but really everything is crying and I'm glad I can do it instead of holding everything in—I'm sobbing softly then loudly than softly again, another burst and then my mother comes over as if to comfort me, I say please don't touch me, she goes away. Later, somewhere in this sobbing, Lauren comes over too and I hold her hands and say thank you, but please don't touch me. I'm alone here, crying it feels like defiance and beauty rolled into something more transformative than power.

If I'm trying to establish some form of narrative here, crying is that narrative and everything else is around it, elemental is the word I'm thinking of—crying is elemental, the rest is important too but I can't reestablish the order with all this crying. I say what did you think of my letter? He says I don't think I got it. I say would you like me to read it to you now? He says yes.

Can I say something about my father's voice? Feeble is not the word I would use, though I can see others invoking it. Can I possibly choose innocent? Softer and more childish than before. I say to my mother: Could you go get the letter?

My mother: That is not possible. Me: Karin thinks I'm going to give you a stroke. My mother: There are other things to talk about besides the letter. Me: Well, I remember it—I can talk. Is this when I start sobbing? It makes more sense here, if here is about sense. My mother is standing on my father's left side with her eyes set in angry determination and this is the moment made for the movies, I can feel my body arching back—this is the fight-or-flight reflex, I mean the fight part. I say: You're just trying to control his death because you couldn't control your life with him. And the tears are pouring down my face like armor. This is the moment when I'm cold like the way I survived them except that I'm also crying—it's both at the same time and my father says: Is that true, Karin?

Helen is the first one to excuse herself from the room and then Alex and then Lauren asks if I'd like her to leave, yes, and my mother is gone soon too but I can hear both her and my sister lurking in different places trying not to make any noise. I want to say that the words aren't important it's the feeling that matters, except that the words are important and the feeling matters.

But what are the words? I'm trying to recreate the letter, saying: When I first heard that you had cancer, the way I reacted surprised me, because for so long I had wanted any trace of you to disappear from my life, but I found myself wishing that I could save you, thinking about different healthcare modalities that I could suggest: acupuncture, guided visualization, meditation. I realized I still had some hope that you'd come to terms with sexually abusing me, that you would acknowledge it and then we could have some mundane conversation about publishers or something else from my life I thought you might be interested in.

I see his face tense in a grimace when I say sexually abuse, but where I'm really crying, probably the most except for at the beginning, is when I'm saying I wish you could acknowledge sexually abusing me, because it would make it easier for me to go on living. That same place where I always cry, because I'm asking for something that he could give me. He's crying too, a few tears dripping down his face and he says thank you for sharing your letter and then there are so many layers to my sobbing: there's holding the chest while spasming anyway; there's tears gliding smoothly down skin; there's speaking with tears in eyes, in face, inside vision, in everything.

What I want to do is to touch his arm, softly. It feels intimate and nurturing and dangerous and at this moment I'm OK with all of these sensations. At some point I say that I've learned there are other ways to be strong besides holding everything in—I'm just trying to be honest, and no one can deal with it—and of course here there is more sobbing, sobbing is the texture of the air, sobbing is the feeling of this room, sobbing here it feels like strength.

At some point he's choking and I'm asking if he's OK and then my sister Lauren magically appears to ask him if he needs anything to drink. She's been in the kitchen the whole time. I've heard her trying not to breathe too loudly. He looks confused, holds his hand up and it swings in the air. Can you get something for Matthew? he says. Lauren says to him: Do you want ginger ale? I ask for a bottle of water, if there's one that is warm, and Lauren returns with a glass of ginger ale and the water. My father pushes away the ginger ale—Matthew, he says. Oh I have water, I say. My father pushes the ginger ale away again. Lauren says I'll just leave it here for you.

Did I mention that I can see my mother standing in the doorway of the dining room, eyes narrowed while drinking a beer, and at this point she emerges with the postcard from my new book in her hand, that's what she thought I should talk about earlier. I hand it to him—why not?—he reads the title, or part of it—I can't tell which part—I think he says that he likes the cover. I ask him if he wants me to read the blurb, since the print is so small and I think he's having difficulty seeing—although I can't tell if he understands what I'm reading. At this point I'm talking softly—I can't tell if it's because of intimacy or because everyone's listening—I think they've moved further away now, but I'm not so sure.

There are moments of silence and then there are points when I'm talking about more mundane things, even though I'm not sure if

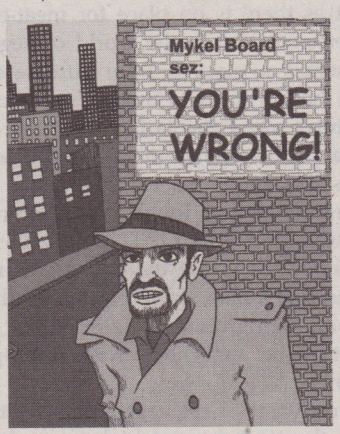
I should, since it's not like my father has acknowledged anything. I'm talking about the gentrification in the neighborhood where he and my mother were buying a condo; how sad it is, even if the neighborhood is busy with so much activity, because of all the displacement to make way for richer people's leisure activities. At one point he says something that I don't understand, it sounds like: You're a very compelling liar. But he doesn't look like that's what he's saying, I ask him to repeat himself but he doesn't—talking is difficult for him, a lot of the time we're together his eyes are closed and I ask him if he's tired. He says no. I ask is it because of the drugs? and he doesn't say anything. I say, Your eyes are closed, but you're listening, right? He nods. This might be the first time he's ever listened to me.

At one point, his eyes are closed and there's a single tear dripping down his cheek—I touch it with my finger, then brush his hand softly again. It's almost sexual in this moment, even if it's scary to say that. My mother enters the kitchen to ask Helen if it's time to give my father his meds, Helen comes in to ask him if that's what he wants and he tightens his face and hands, not yet. Even though earlier his whole body had tensed into one large spasm, he was fighting back against the pain and I asked him if he needed anything. I didn't expect to want to care for him, but I don't like seeing him in pain, seeing him dying, even after everything he's done to me.

I tell my father I'm leaving, it's time for them to give him his medication—or at least that's what they think, what the doctors think, even though the medication takes away his ability to express himself clearly, though it's hard to tell what is the medication and what is cancer. I say, I'm glad that you asked me to share the letter. He says, I'm glad too. He says, Will you be here when I wake up? I say no, but I will come back tomorrow night.

When I leave the room, I don't feel afraid of the house anymore. I can go downstairs where so much of everything horrible happened. His office looks much cleaner, the carpet is newer—no stains of mold or cum, images of the past or even fear really. The door to the rec room is scarier, especially when I can't find the light right away, but even behind the bar, in that moldy sink where I was a broken toy—I don't know, it's harder to feel all that while also feeling everything now. Like the chimney where I'd imagine myself floating away, away from him splitting me open, right now it just looks like a chimney, I mean a fireplace leading to a chimney.

Check out my new anthology, *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*, and tell me what you think! You can also check in on me at my new blog, http://nobodypasses.blogspot.com. The expanded second edition of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation*, originally scheduled for October 2006, has been delayed—I predict February 2007. I live for feedback, so send me love letters and/or delicious threats via www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or write to PO Box 640047, San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.



"Never give advice! Let them stew in their own juice and rot!...the more the better!... one little piece of advice and people never forgive you!"
— Celine

Before I start in on my Celine violation—handing out advice like it was candy to a prepubescent—I've got to bring you into my bedroom. Here, have a seat in the desk chair.

It's late. I lay in bed. My fall-asleep jerk off, already jerked. My nightly chapter of *Nightmare Alley* already read. It's time to hit the hay, crash, catch some Zs. Visions of Orientals dance behind my closed eyelids. It must be midnight. I've got to get up at seven, make coffee, check eBay, drink coffee, shit, brush my teeth, roughly in that order. Then the subway to work where, at 9 am, I begin the task of teaching Japanese housewives how to talk good English.

A faint whirring comes in through the closed window behind my head.

The whirring gets louder. Ah, a police siren... and voices. Lots of voices, and whistles, and more sirens. I'm up now, madder than a Jew at a bacon breakfast.

Jesus fuck! It's another demonstration. This one later than any rational person would be on the street. I bet it's bikes. Sounds like the storm troopers of Critical Mass.

I look out my window. I see first one then a dozen guys on bikes. The first to enter my field of vision wears a yellow shirt, black spandex shorts, and a helmet with a big circled A on it. Then, there are dozens of 'em. Bikes, riders in spandex, with helmets or not, shorts or not, leg muscles out to here, skimpy clothes in the fall on Broadway. Average age? I guess 25. Not a chubby one in the group. Fit as fiddles, the lot of 'em. Kids out for a good loud time. Causing chaos down below. As a fan of chaos, you'd think I like this kind of thing. You'd think wrong.

Is it anarchist? No! It's fascist. It's goose pedaling to the beat of the master race. It's macho, saying if you aren't tough...if you don't have the leg power to ride a bike, stay at home, you faggot! You wimp! *We* own the streets.

Are you an 80-year old woman? Tough, ride or die! Paraplegic? Fuck you cripple. Pedal with your hands!

The Critical Mass website says, "We aren't blocking traffic. We *are* traffic."

Yeah, tell it to the guy who dies of a heart attack or is felled by a stroke because the ambulance couldn't get through your bells and whistles.

It's not only in Critical Mass demos that this spandexed machismo runs rampant in the city. I dodge it every night, when common bike riders don't have the decency to put a light on their bikes. When they say to pedestrians and drivers: death? Hah! I'm tough. I don't fear death. My death is your fault. If you can't see me, that's tough for you. Come on, hit me. I dare you.

I see it in riding the wrong way down one-way streets. I see it in bike riders terrorizing pedestrians going through red lights and shouting at people to get out of the way.

"It's *my* world," they say, "and if you want to survive in it, get out of the way."

Listen, buckaroos, if you want to ride a bike, it's up to you. I'm pro-choice. But if you want *me* to ride a bike. If you tell me and my wheelchair-bound parents, and the old lady who lives next door, and the heart attack patient, and the UPS driver to ride bikes, I'm gonna fight back. I'm not gonna take the bullying. I will defy you.

Sudden flat tire? Guess who. Chain slipped? Hmmm, I wonder. I'd like to take that chain and shove it up your critical mass. If I don't, someone else will. My advice is: watch your back.

Am I saying that militant bicyclers are the cause of all the world's problems? Ah, were it only true. We could just open our car doors into traffic. BLAU! Downhill splat. Like spraying mosquitoes. It would be easy.

But there is another group... just as totalitarian, just as macho, just as dangerous. Before I discuss them, I want you to join me in some time and space travel.

The year is 2004. The place: the highlands of Mongolia. It's the winter. Mongolia faces its worst *zuud* in fifty years.

[Aside: A *zuud* is a series of winter blizzards accompanied by extreme cold. It kills millions of livestock and hundreds of people. A *zuud* means physical and economic devastation.]

A herder on the steppes walks over to one of his goats, frozen solid in the extreme weather. Hungry, newly impoverished (in Mongolia, your animals are your wealth), he thinks about lying down in the cold. Letting it devour him. It's easier than living through this.

Instead, the man cradles the dead animal and carries it into his *ger* (those big round tents that Americans like to call *yurts*). There is a dung-fueled fire in the central stove. On the stove, a pot of water boils. The man's wife, a moon-faced woman with high cheekbones and a square body that belies her extreme hunger, sits and waits. Their three-month old son sucks hungrily at her almost dry nipple. Next to them sit his three daughters, eagerly awaiting his return.

The man has decided he wants to live. His family needs him. He will be poor, but they will live.

Inside the *ger*, it's toasty warm. Mongolians are experts at insulation. In a few hours, the goat thaws enough for the man to skin it, cut it apart, and put it into the boiling water. The plunging meat cools the water a bit. The boiling stops. Then a few bubbles rise to the surface. In an hour, it's time to save some lives.

As the family begins to divide the fresh meat, the sound of a helicopter comes from overhead. The *ger* shakes as the whirlybird comes closer. In the front of the *ger*, the man hears a sharp THUMP. Then, the sound of running and a bang on the door.

Stunned, it's a few seconds before he goes to the door to see a young American wrapped in plastic, dragging a parachute.

"Stop!" shouts the American. "You can't do that. Don't you know MEAT IS MURDER?"

Yes! I'm talking about *vegetarians*!

Like people who ride bikes for pleasure, I have no complaints about casual vegetarians. I eat pizza with friends who go for a *half-sausage half-mushroom*. I'm yelling at those swaggering, victual hitmen. Food fascists who demand the world pay homage to *their* preferences.

They would have Kwashiorkor (disease caused by severe lack of protein) sufferers die to save the life of a lamb. They would scoff at complaining when a *Jaws* shark has a water-skier for lunch. But let the skier be on the other side of the table. Whoa! Save the sharks.

OK, let's look at the whole picture. Half a million people die in Iraq. Are a few loud bikers that serious? The US government is building a database on every American, every email, every phone call. Are a few hundred (thousand?) jackass vegetarians that important in the scheme of things?

Answer: They're not important like the E-Coli virus. They're important like a rotted liver. They are not the disease, but symptoms of something very serious. Bike riders and vegetarians are part of the same totalitarian thinking that gives us George W. Bush and Southern Baptists. They are symptoms of the idea that we know right from wrong and *you* have to follow our right—or we will hurt you. They are symptoms of all fascism.

Just as there's no space in the world of the bike riders for the weak or handicapped, there's no space in the world of the Baptists for homosexuals or prostitutes.

Just as there is no place for meat-eating self-determination in the world of vegetarians, there is no place for Iraqi self-determination in the world of GW Bush. It's no accident that Hitler was a vegetarian. The most basic foundation of vegetarianism—and bike riding—is fascism.

Want my advice? Tough, you're gonna get it anyway. That is: STOP IT. STOP IT! STOP IT!!! Your way is not the only way. If you want to ride a bike, do it. But realize there's no moral high ground in it. Recognize it for what it can be: a macho exercise in self-glorification.

If you want to eat vegetables, do it. But realize there's no moral high ground in it. Recognize that one gal's broccoli is another man's chicken a la king.

My advice is the same for bike-riders, vegetarians, war supporters, and racists. Learn a little tolerance. Not everyone is like you. Not everyone should be like you. Relax. Give the rest of us a little slack. That's my advice. Sorry Celine, I'm not keeping it to myself.

Endnotes: Email subscribers (god@mykelboard. com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard. com) will get live links and a chance to email comment on the column.

Global Warming? What global warming dept: the *Competitive Enterprise Institute* released two TV commercials just before Al Gore published his book on the horrors of global warming.

CEI is an industry apology group funded by Exxon, Amoco and the American Petroleum Institute. Their commercials feature children blowing dandelions, animals skipping around in their natural habitats, and people getting into their cars.

Say the ads: "They call it pollution. We call it life."

So first they say there is no global warming. Then, they say humans didn't cause it. Now they say, there *is* global warming, humans caused it... and it's good for you.

Further on the global warming front dept: The *Utne Reader* reports that researchers from Duke and Harvard Universities piped carbon dioxide into a controlled forest environment at levels expected by 2050. The result? Poison ivy grew 150% faster and produced a stronger concentration of urushiol, the "poison" in Poison Ivy. If global warming continues, things are gonna get mighty itchy around here.

I'm king of the Bushmen dept: Leo De Caprio being called on by the Kalahari Bushmen to help save their land from evil diamond miners? Sounds like the plot of a Hollywood blockbuster—except it's true.

Cute-boy De Caprio, star of *Blood Diamond*, a new movie about this sinister diamond trade. Meanwhile, real miners have just started digging in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. The Kalahari bushmen have lived in the area for thousands of years but are only now succumbing to First World diseases. AIDS is spreading rapidly as they get screwed in more ways than one by corporate investors.

Their way of life is under the threat of extinction as they are evicted and forced into reserves. They have called on the Titanic heartthrob to highlight their plight to the world. See www.survival-international.org for more details.

I'm number 885,550,364 dept: Are you feeling loaded? No? Well how about some help to put it into perspective?

At www.globalrichlist.com you can enter your yearly income and it will calculate exactly how rich you are.

So, I am the 885,550,364th richest person in the world! Top 14.75%. No you cannot borrow $10. Ask number 885,550,363.

Carrying the torch dept: For many years I had an organization called The World for Free, where folks could stay with each other free, all over the world. The idea was to screw hotels, meet fine folks, and maybe end up screwing each other (in a good way).

Post office incompetence put an end to The World For Free. In the meantime, I've discovered two similar organizations, internet based. I joined them both: couchsurfing.com and hospitalityclub.org I have no idea if they work... yet. I'll let you know when I get back from your couch.

Yowsah dept: I wanna thank Maria and Rys from Rock Yer Socks in Connecticut. They put on a great show, had me read between bands, and I sold a ton of books. Yeah! If you're looking to play somewhere between New York City and Boston, check out www.rockyersocks.org. They're great people and really easy to work with.

And also dept: Part of that CT show was a band called Bovachevo. You can check them out on MySpace They are jaw-droppingly great. No vocals, just a hugely powerful trio with a drummer who gives Dickie Peterson a run for his money! If you don't see these guys, your life will be worth a little less.

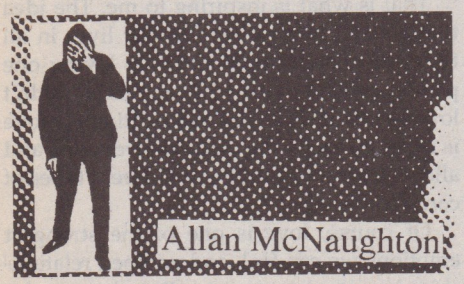
Seems like every month there's another story about Norway. We had one about traffic tickets, one about how Oslo is the world's

most expensive city. Now a United Nations survey ranks Norway as *the world's best nation to live in.* Number two is Iceland. The US ranks number eight. Hard to believe we're so high on the list.

Oh yeah, in case you're thinking of traveling, Sierra Leone is smack dab at the bottom.

Higher numbers dept: If the US manages to rank a high number eight on the livability index. It ranks a low number 53 in *Worldwide Press Freedom.* After a mediocre 17 in 2002, we've plummeted to a new low.

Reporters without Borders, who does the ranking, rated Finland as number one. They dropped Denmark, the former number one, to number nineteen. The country dropped because of serious threats against the authors of the Mohamed cartoons published there in autumn 2005. For the first time in recent years in a country that is very observant of civil liberties, journalists had to have police protection due to threats against them because of their work.



I can't believe it was seventeen years ago now, but it was. I'd gone to King Tut's Wah Wah Hut in Glasgow to see Snuff, who was probably the best band around at the time—if not in the world, then certainly in the UK. Their first EP, with all the coppers on the seafront, had been getting constant play at home since I'd heard them on John Peel and picked it up. The support band for the night had a familiar name, but I'd never heard them before. Leatherface, they were called. Seemed like a pretty stupid name and a guy I knew told me they weren't that good. Still, I decided to check them out. One guy had a dodgy spiky-topped mullet and the drummer looked like a bit of a bruiser. Visually not very arresting, but when the first guitar kicked in it was instantly familiar. Then it registered that the mullet guitarist was out of HDQ, who I really liked. This was something else again, though. I was instantly swept up in the power and melody of Leatherface, and was blown away by the gruff intensity of Frankie Stubbs's voice. Snuff was also great that night, but it was the surprise discovery of a new favorite band that marks the night as special in my memory.

I'd borrowed a clunky VHS video camera from college to shoot Snuff that night, and I managed to get a few Leatherface songs as well. At some point I think I lent the tape (the original!) to a guy from Preston called Frosty, and I've never seen it since. There's one other copy that my friend Sandy's got somewhere. After the gig Sandy and I interviewed Snuff (with the members of Leatherface present) for the second issue of our zine that never actually appeared. How many zines never make it past issue one?

That first issue was like a cry for help from a small town—there were about four punks in our village, so we started a zine, doing through-the-mail interviews with bands we liked (Doom, Cowboy Killers, and Stretch Heads) and a star-struck in-person interview with Joe Lally from Fugazi (he was star-struck, by the way, not us). Once we'd put the zine together (nicking layout ideas liberally from the *Skate Muties,* who had nicked their ideas from *Sic Teen*) and photocopied it at our mate's mum's office after-hours, we brought it to gigs in Glasgow to sell. In hindsight, the zine was crap, but through trying to sell it we met a few other zinesters and people in bands—in other words, it had the desired effect of putting us in touch with the wider punk scene around us. Once we had established those acquaintances and friendships, the zine had lost its *raison d'etre.* We did a bunch of interviews for #2, including DOA, UK Subs, and Snuff, but we were too busy going to gigs, socializing with our newfound punk scene friends, and communicating with other punks around the world via flyer-stuffed re-used envelopes and glued stamps.

I don't really know where I'm going with this. I suppose I'm just writing this down so I don't forget it, so we don't forget. It's pretty unlikely these days that I'll randomly see a band and they'll become a lifelong favorite. Not because there aren't great bands playing today, but because my tastes are pretty developed by this point, and also because I tend to find out about bands long before there's any chance to see them live. Some of us still find out about bands via the radio and through mags like *MRR* and *The Big Takeover,* but I think we're increasingly in the minority. I confess I hear a lot of bands for the first time now via the internet, and it's usually less than a few clicks, if that, from reading a mention of a band on someone's blog or on a message board to listening to their music on their MySpace page. Convenience-wise, this is just unbelievable, but I really hope that one day I'll be pleasantly surprised again at some random show.

Similarly, with all these online communities and such, will isolated kids in small towns feel the need to start zines to reach out to the world at large? Should they? Should I care? I dunno, there's just something endearing and romantic about it. It would be a shame to see that sort of thing disappear for good.

Writing this stuff got me nostalgic, so I went on YouTube to look for footage of Snuff and Leatherface. It's amazing how that site just sucks you in. It's a fucking goldmine. I never even knew that Leatherface had made a video, yet here they are, messing about in a scrapyard to the strains of their track "Peasant In Paradise." Quaint and wonderful.

PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609, USA
allan@dropout.cc / www.dropout.cc. If you live in an isolated small town and do a zine, good for you, but don't send it to me.

Talking to Wendy-O Matik

November 15, 2006, Wednesday

I'm sitting in a leopard print chair, with three large glass camera eyes a few feet away, a semi-circle of studio lights blazing overhead. The lights are generating a lot of heat, but I refuse to take off my jacket. The familiar soft black denim, a patchwork of odd spikes, pins, tears, and patches, comforts me like armor, an old friend who's gone with me into battle everywhere. I'm feeling nervous, excited, hyped up on too much coffee, but trying not to look like it. I'm the host after all, the one supposed to be calm, collected, relaxed. Ha!

I'm sitting in the television studio of Access SF, the cable access station for San Francisco, filming the interview for episode four of *Channel Zero.* It's a bit funny, after having played so many shows, having screamed in front of thousands of people over the years, that I can still get nervous, but I do. Plus, a studio feels weird because it is so quiet, and dark, and it's just me, the camera people and my guest in a big room without any music, just the sound of us talking. And, my guest for the evening is a woman whom I admire, whose words have helped influenced my outlook on life.

For today's shoot I organized an all-volunteer crew of seven people. On camera: Bernard (who has his own show called *Bernard's Bookshelf* and who always makes me laugh), Dina (who volunteers on lots of shows) and the amazing Perry (who is working on a documentary about a family who survived Hiroshima, and who always wears a scarf and rides his bike everywhere). In the

control room: Larry (who used to be a punk in the '70s and now has over ten cats) is operating the switcher, my roommate Tina (who has also worked in cable access for several years, and has been in bands) is directing and calling the shots, Mark is checking levels on the audio board, and Aaron is in the back keeping an eye on the tape decks, both for the blue screen and the recording.

Behind me the wall is painted blue, and I covered the floor with a blue tarp. The set looks really cool, a bit surreal, two leopard print chairs and a lamp surrounded by blue, but it's also for the chroma key that will replace the blue color with my video input. On the studio's television monitor you can see the effect. Using footage I took earlier that same day, it looks like my chair is on the flat gravel roof outside my apartment, with palm trees, a blue sky and Mission Street in the background. It looks like we're sitting on the roof!

After about two hours of setting lights and mics, talking about shots and camera angles, and then taking a break and eating pizza (my thanks for their great help), hanging out and getting ready, the crew is ready to go, and we're ready to roll. I look over my notes again, my scribbled lines and questions, take a deep breath, and remember to just be myself, there is nothing to worry about, that this is going to be a fun.

Bernard says, "All quiet on the set," and I stop fidgeting, well, at least not as much. Then a moment later he gets the order from Tina, through the headphones, to give me a countdown from ten. He holds up all his fingers, counting out loud down until three, then silently going down to one, and then points to the camera. That's my cue.

I look at the camera and pretend I'm talking to my friends (who are the people who are going to be watching the video anyway), "Welcome to *Channel Zero*, and we have another kick ass show for you this evening, with footage from two of my favorite bands—Behind Enemy Lines playing the Be Part of the Scene, Not the Scenery festival in Stuttgart, Germany, and To What End? playing a festival in Uppsala, Sweden. But for now, I am very pleased to introduce Wendy-o Matik here in the studio. Wendy is a radical author, poet, and spoken word artist, and has been described as a 'warrior of the heart.' Wendy, welcome to the show!" Yeah!

Sitting next to me on another leopard print chair is Wendy-o Matik, who comes across even more amazing in person as in her writings. My copy of her book *Redefining Our Relationships: Guidelines to Responsible Open Relationships* is tattered from repeated readings over the past two years. I think it is important and daring in that it challenges the conceptions and rules set by society on how we can relate to each other, love each other, and what relationships can look like. Wendy's book also reads more like a personal story than a how-to book or a sociological paper, and inspires me.

Emma Goldman's essays on marriage and love skewer the underlying assumptions that love can be sanctioned by church or state, and that love should be controlled, harnessed or can be possibly protected by the patriarchal model of marriage and ownership of another person's love and body. *Redefining Our Relationships* makes the brave leap from the grand anarcha-feminist theory into life, and demonstrates how a relationship outside the monogamous model can work in the real world. After the introduction, I asked Wendy to talk more about her book.

Wendy said, "The point of the book is to redefine our relationships, to actually put the power back into people's minds and hearts that there isn't one formula for everyone, that maybe monogamony works for a great number of people, but not everyone, and that we should really ask, *'What do we want from this relationship?'*

"I'm speaking about not just the relationship of the person you're sleeping with, but from your friends and your family, the people you pass on the street, your community. Perhaps all of those relationships could be powerful and loving and meaningful. Which gets to the heart of radical love, which is the freedom to love who you want, how you want and as many people as you want, as long as personal respect, integrity and honesty are at the core of any and all of those relationships. For me, I truly believe that love is a revolutionary force that can transform our lives and transform the world.

"This book is for people who are willing to ask themselves some really deep questions. And, some really painful questions. Such as, 'What if everything I've been told about love is wrong?' Also this book is addressing the anarchist-feminist perspective. I'm critiquing what relationships could be, should be, have the potential to be without the patriarchal framework in which we we've grown up with. Imagine if we loved in another way."

Indeed! I was less nervous by now, listening to Wendy sitting in her chair, covered in amazing tattoos, talking about the revolutionary power of love. But as host, I had to keep asking questions, that's part of the job. There are a lot of misconceptions about open relationships, so I asked, "How does a 'responsible open relationship' look different than the swinger scene, casual dating, or just having sex with lots of people?"

Wendy said, "For me, I define open relationships as a radically different relationship outside the status quo whereby partners encourage their loved ones, their lovers, their friends, their partner or partners, to follow these non-restricted paths of love, however you define them, and it may be different for everyone, so long as integrity and honesty are at the core of any and all relationships. It's really about making sure you connect deeply, and you want something sustainable, and something committed, you aren't just interested in a one-night stand. So, that's different than sex with just anyone, no strings attached, that's not what I'm writing about in my book."

I replied, "So, it's more about bringing people into your life, and them being part of your life, being committed to people on all different levels?"

"Right. It's really about creating community on a deeper level. It's not just about who you're having sex with, but how you deepen the capacity of your heart to love many people, whether it be a friendship or someone you just met. That's the kind of love I'm trying to tap into, not just the sexual love."

That is what is inspiring to me. The idea that we can bring love into our lives in all types of relationships, and that loving one person doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't love someone else. The competition for love is replaced by the capacity to love more, and allows for the possibility of different types of connections.

Of course, love is one of the strongest emotions we can feel, and an open relationship is not always easy. But then again, monogamous relationships aren't always easy, either. Any healthy relationship depends on trust, love, respect, and honesty, and this is essential in an open relationship or it just doesn't work. Being in an open relationship has caused me to re-think how I treat people I'm with, to take them less for granted, to question how I react to things, to be more honest about everything. I've had to work through jealousy by becoming more secure with myself, to think about what it means to trust someone, and communicate better about things that are hard to talk about. It hasn't been always easy, but it's always been good in the end, and has led to deeper connections and understanding.

Wendy and I continued talking, and Bernard behind the camera started making a circle in the air, the signal to wrap it up, that I was out of time for this segment of the show. At first, I had ignored him and the studio clock, so interested in what Wendy was saying. But then Bernard, with Tina giving commands from the control room, started slicing his throat with his finger, the signal to cut, and soon he was waving wildly at me (and after the show Wendy told me she thought something was wrong, he looked like he was telling us the building was on fire!). So, being the host, I had to politely stop the conversation and introduce the

next clip.

"We'll be back in a minute for more conversation, but for now, let's listen to Wendy performing her spoken word piece "Theory of Mutation."" The recorded audio piece, which I added video to for the show, was included on the Logical Nonsense/Grimple split that came out in 1993. Wendy's words address modern industrial society, are powerful and poetic, with an amazing musical/sound effect combined that makes your skin crawl. And for the video, I added the stark scene of driving into Chicago, the massive power lines and electric plants leading towards the city.

It was really cool meeting Wendy, and having her on my show. Before we got started, while I was eating pizza with the crew and telling her about the schedule, she told me something that has really stuck with me, something I try to think about. She said, "I try to approach everything I do with love." She gave an example about eating, and how she tries to take time to appreciate her food while she is eating it, and the people who grew it, and where the food came from. In a sense, she is eating with love. Modern living so often creates blind consumers, that most people don't even stop to think about what they are putting into their bodies, the lives of the workers who made the food, and the animals and plants consumed.

Wendy said she tries to apply this concept to the rest of her life, thinking with love as she approaches situations and the people she meets and everyone she relates with. It's a small thing, but a radical concept. As Wendy pointed out, how could we possibly wage war if we thought with love towards other people, and everything we did?

END NOTES:

January 6, Saturday

A long hellish day at work, followed by two hot toddies with Jack Daniels at the bar with Brice. Did I drink with love? Did I talk to Brice with love? Definitely, yes. I tried to write this column with love too, but I'm feeling a bit strange. All this talk about love is really new to me. I've spent years and years being angry at the world, and that's where I'm comfortable. It's a lot easier to keep the spiked jacket on, then to write something closer to the heart, something looking at the possibilities of the positive. But, I'm learning. Sometimes, it's a nice change of pace.

I'm also a chapter behind on my column. My notebook is full of adventures from Pumpkin Hollow in Tennessee where I met folks from *Fifth Estate*, so many things I love about San Francisco, fun shows, and memories of Boston. But, I've been busy, so those tales will have to wait.

I'd also like to tell everyone to read *Doris, an Anthology 1991-2001* by Cindy Gretchen Ovenrack Crabb. Cindy speaks so directly, so honestly about life, that it amazes me. She has that rare ability to articulate feelings that we usually never share, and make them seem plain as day. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

You can check out *Channel Zero* clips at www.channelzerosf.wordpress.com.

Cheers to all good friends everywhere, and thanks for reading. Solidarity, Erika

Happy 2007! I know that the year is over a month old as you're reading this, but take it as belated new year's wishes from yours truly. It's also been over two years since I began this column and, once again, I'm grateful to have this forum. Hell, I didn't even get any backlash from my pro-FU's column a few months back. Or maybe it slipped under the radar. Who knows?

I couldn't wait for 2006 to end. Not that it was all bad—for one thing, I haven't had an epileptic seizure in almost a year. I managed to shed some weight and so has my lovely wife Ellen. I'm quite happy that I'm able to once again wear the cool 1997 vintage Nine Shocks Terror shirt with the Freddie Blassie design. If you don't know who Freddie Blassie is, then you're nothing but a pencil-neck geek. Look it up if you have no idea what I'm talking about. Try Wikipedia. Everything's on there, or so it seems. In any case, I don't even have to suck in my gut while wearing the shirt in public. Well, I did the first time I wore it again but I don't have to do that anymore. The funny thing is I have a friend who is a pretty big Nine Shocks fan and she was kind of repulsed by the shirt. Oh well.

Of course, the best thing—make that person—in my life is still Ellen. It's amazing she continues to put up with my nonsense and provide nearly unconditional love and support. When I told her I was writing that in the column, she did inform me that it doesn't apply to my singing along to various Mentors' songs late at night. I suppose I can't blame her. Napoleon XIV's "They're Coming To Take Me Away, Ha-Haaa!" is another song she wants banished from Al's Hit Parade. This also includes the 8 minute and 28 second cover version by LARD—incidentally, Jello's performance on that song is beyond words. In many ways! I think it's one of his best post-DKs musical moments. But regarding Napoleon XIV's version, it does make me wonder if the 1966 record buying public should have had their cash or charge cards taken away after that song hit #3 on the Billboard charts. Actually, it's probably my favorite one hit wonder/novelty song next to the Buoys' cannibalism classic "Timothy." I have both singles and the B-side of "They're Coming to Take Me Away" is the song played backwards. A re-release of the single in 1973 didn't fare nearly as well, only reaching #87. That fickle public—one day you're on top of the world, one day you're a has-been. According to Wayne Janick's The Billboard Book of One Hit Wonders, Jerry Samuels, who was the mastermind behind that single, Mr. Napoleon XIV himself, later found employment as the owner of a talent agency that specializes in supplying entertainment to senior citizen facilities. Well, it's a living, I guess.

How did I end up here? Oh yeah—talking about songs I shouldn't play (or play quietly, at least) so I can continue to live in this house. But, yes, Ellen is the best and so are all the friends who have given both of us tremendous support during the tough times. So those are the good things and they help to offset what wasn't so enjoyable about the past year. I won't go into excruciating detail but there was a fair amount of suck-age.

I wrote in my August column about the May storm that dropped 12 inches of rain on the area and the downstairs of our house was affected. We got spared, compared to what other folks around here had to deal with but we still had to have the carpeting replaced and I had to move everything out of the downstairs of the house. That included all my books, furniture and CDs... all 4000 or so... There was an ordeal with a shady carpet cleaning company, before my brother-in-law came to the rescue and installed new carpeting. Still, I had to relocate my "office" to a small bedroom for around five weeks.

It seemed as though everything has been breaking down over the past year. My teeth, for one thing—I had four crowns put in, plus a root canal. I don't know what hurt worse—the procedure or the price. Now that I think about it, no contest—it was the latter. I'm having two more done later this month, by the way. I'm glad that I can at least help pay for the new addition on my dentist's house.

My car also needed a lot of work and one place couldn't figure out the problem so I took it to the dealership, which did fix the problem but it wasn't cheap. We needed some plumbing done over the summer. Our TV's picture tube blew up in July but, fortunately, I was able to get a replacement for $40. Our washing machine shit the bed and had to be replaced. I also had to take the computer on which I'm typing this column to two different places to get it fixed. It was a two

and a half week ordeal and it's still not perfect (anyone know how to fix Outlook Express?) but I didn't lose any data and most of the programs have been reinstalled. Incidentally, speaking of the Mentors, one of the computer repair guys bore a striking resemblance to El Duce. I was whistling "Sandwich of Love" under my breath while I was there. After the headaches and hassles to get it back, I almost wonder if the real El Duce in his current state (dead) could have done a better job.

All this crap reminds me of the DKs song "Trust Your Mechanic." Sing along with Jello! I'd like to print the words to the whole song but want to preserve some space:

"Trust your mechanic to mend your car/Bring it in to his garage/He tightens and loosens a few spare parts/One thing's fixed, another falls apart/And the rich eat you... Trust your mechanic/To plug your holes/Trust him to make more somewhere else/Trust your mechanic/He'll always come through/And rip you off..."

Ain't those words the truth, eh? So there you have it. A not-so-great year in review but, hey, it could always be worse. For instance, the ongoing war in Iraq, where the death toll of US troops just passed 3000. There have been more American service people killed in the current military actions than died on 9/11. Saddam has been executed but that's not going to stop the carnage. Speaking of that execution, I'm sure some people out there completely got off on seeing the pictures of Saddam with the noose round his neck with the video of his hanging making the rounds. Hand down the pants, doing the 'ol five knuckle shuffle to this snuff film. Right-wing pornography! I guess that kind of porn is OK to the hellfire 'n moralilty crowd.

On the topic of the body count, though, I was disgusted to read a comment from the Pentagon about the 3000th death. This comes from the Boston Globe: "The White House said President Bush would not comment directly on the 3000th death. A Pentagon spokesman said there was 'no special significance to the overall number of casualties.'" That was only part of the quotation (I suppose that does show a bit of bias on the part of Globe reporter Raja Mishra)—a Reuters article put it in a bit more context: "'Every loss is regretted and there is no special significance to the overall number of casualties,' Pentagon spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Mark Ballesteros said."

At least the Pentagon flack said that the loss is regrettable but I would say that there certainly is significance to that number. There's significance to any death in that illegal invasion and occupation. It didn't have to happen in the first place. Of course, if the Pentagon acknowledged that, it could generate more questions and doubt about the so-called "mission" over there. You know—the one that was accomplished in 2003, according to Bush.

By the way, some of the veterans who have returned have new battles to fight. No, I'm not talking about those who face cuts in veteran's benefits—people who need help in coping with both the physical and emotional trauma that will linger for years after their return. In this case, I'm not talking about that although I should be. Nope, I'm talking about the battle against the queers who want to get married. Once again, there are attempts being made here in Massachusetts to force a question onto the ballot that would abolish gay marriage.

Joseph A. Ryan of Harwich, MA is on the forefront of that noble (?) battle. In a letter to the Globe, Mr. Ryan writes, "as a veteran—and husband to my real wife of 49 years—"the defense of the sanctity of marriage is no less important than the defense of our great country..." "Real wife," eh? So gay spouses aren't real husbands or wives? Also, I would guess that there are plenty of gay relationships that have lasted as long as his, or longer. OK, I get it now. You go, Joe. I'm glad our military personnel are defending freedom, as long as that freedom doesn't include the right for one individual to marry another individual, regardless of gender or sexual preference. It does this American's heart proud!!!

More not-so-great news about the gay marriage issue came in the past few days, as well. As I've probably mentioned in this space, there's an effort to put a question on the 2008 ballot that would outlaw gay marriage in Massachusetts. Each year, there's a Constitutional convention and if 50 out of 200 legislators vote, during two consecutive sessions, to move the question forward, it ends up on the ballot. The most recent vote was 62 in favor, 134 against so at least a majority of the legislature don't want to allow this bigoted proposal onto the ballot. Unfortunately, my own state rep Joyce Spiliotis, a socially conservative Democrat, voted with the bigots. Fortunately, Massachusetts has a new, progressive-minded governor named Deval Patrick and he supports gay marriage so maybe there's a glimmer of hope.

So we'll end this part of the column on an upbeat note—happy new year, even to the members of the American Taliban. Hmm... actually, if their year wasn't so happy, that'd be okay with me...

Best of 2006

I'm sure you're all just dying to know what my favorite records, CDs, etc. were over the past 12 months or so. Well, here 'ya go. Overall, there have been stronger years for releases. I probably played the Black SS album more than any other this year. Blowfly's cover of a certain Ramones song, re-titled "I Wanna Be Fellated" deserves song of the year honors. Maybe not but, the first time I heard it, I literally couldn't stop laughing for ten minutes. When I played it on the radio show for the first time, I had to take a break until I stopped laughing. There are only a few other truly memorable songs on the album but it earns its way on the list, anyway.

It seems as though I'm always writing about how alternative spaces for shows come and go around here, although seems to be a slight improvement lately. On the other hand, the bad news is that Re:Generation Records has shut its doors. It was a record store/tattoo parlor/show space. They had to stop doing shows in late June after receiving a noise complaint. Sue, one of the store's co-owners, posted this on a local message board: "After the shows ended in June, the record store suffered, as well as the finances. The tattoo shop carried the store and it was in bad shape; falling apart, needing new paint, fixtures, etc. We decided to remove the records and put money into adding more tattoo booths and fixing up the place, which would cost an insane amount of money, which we don't have. Ross and I are just burned out, broke and ready to end this before it destroys us. Thank you, everyone for you support and kindness." Re:Gen was only one part of Boston's DIY punk scene but it's still a loss. Sue and Ross deserve a lot of credit for what they did.

Here's my wrap-up... all in alphabetical order...

Best Live Bands:

Brutal Knights (practice space show in Boston) / Fucked Up (Re:Generation Records, Boston) / Government Warning/Pissed Jeans (Pointless Fest, Philly) / Hero Dishonest (basement show in Boston) / Kohu-63 (basement show in Boston) / Limp Wrist (Redrum loft space, Providence) / Look Back and Laugh and Army of Jesus (last show at Regeneration Records) / New Bomb Turks (Abbey Lounge, Somerville, MA) / Nine Shocks Terror, Black SS, The Jury (Valentine's, Albany) / No Hope for The Kids (Millcreek Tavern, Philly) / Out Cold (Re:Generation Records, Boston) / La Piovra (Elks Lodge, Cambridge, MA) / Victims (Democracy Center, Cambridge, MA)

LP'S/CD'S/12":

BLACK SS–Foreign Object / BLANK ITS–Happy Accidents / BLOWFLY–Blowfly's Punk Rock Party / CAUSTIC CHRIST–Lycanthropy / GOVERNMENT WARNING–No Moderation / HERO DISHONEST–When The Shit Hits The Man / LA

PIOVRA–one sided 12" / MIKA MIKO–C.Y.S.L.A.B.F. / POISON IDEA–Latest Will And Testament / REPOS–Hearts and Heads Explode / SHELL SHOCK–Born To Kill / SLAYER–Christ Illusion / SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN– Spontaneous Violence / THE SPARK–Nobody's Laughing / STATE–All Wrong / STRAIGHT TO HELL–Commence The Apocalypse / WITCH HUNT–Blood-Red States / WORLD BURNS TO DEATH–Totalitarian Sodomy

7":

ARMY OF JESUS–Book Bomb / BLANK STARE–both s/t EPs / CARDIAC ARREST–Life's A Dead End / CHRONIC SEIZURE–Brainsick and s/t EPs / CLOAK/DAGGER–Pinata / CONVERSIONS/WITCHES WITH DICKS–split / CONVERSIONS–s/t EP / DEEP SLEEP–You're Screwed / FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES–s/t EP / HOMOSTUPIDS–The Glow / THE JURY–I Hate The Future / KIELTOLAKI–s/t EP / LIMP WRIST–Want Us Dead / LOOK BACK AND LAUGH–Street Terrorism / TODAY'S OVERDOSE–s/t EP / VOLENDAM DISEASE–At War With God / WASTED TIME–s/t EP

Demos:

CIVIL CRISIS / POISON CONTROL / THE YOUTHS

Finally, the Music Reviews:

AMERICA'S DIRTY THIRTYS–*Movement for Tomorrow* (Yellow Dog, CD)

OK—there aren't any surprises here. Hailing from the Bay Area, cut from the mold of Discharge or Varukers or Final Conflict, with a vocalist who affects a British accent (if he is British, my apologies). In other words, this is utterly generic, cookie-cutter, etc. That said, I kind of like it—I'll always be a sucker for this style of punk. So, um, up da punx and turn it up. They've recently changed their name to ADT (Attack Disarm Takeover). (PO Box 550208, 10372 Berlin, GERMANY, www.yellowdog.de)

BLACK BEAUTIES–*Catch a Beat* (Full Breach Kicks, CD)

The power pop revival continues. Well, power pop with a punk snottiness and also including glam-rock touches, without it being a completely dominant factor. Candy Canderson aims to exude bravado and cool, even though he does that with a higher, yelping voice. Sure, the guitar sound has the standard 70s influence (rock 'n roll, not histrionics) but it gets the job more than done and the bass-lines are the underrated element here—supporting the songs and adding its own melodic dynamic. In other words, it makes the songs move—gets 'ya bouncing around. I'm still bouncing here. Enjoyable cheez-whiz without getting overly sugary—most of the time. (2060 N. Carolina Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, www.fullbreach77.com)

GEE STRINGS–*A Bunch of Bugs* (Dead Beat, CD)

Completely enjoyable garage/punk/rock 'n' roll. The German-accented vocals from Ingi are endearing, as are the snappy tunes. While every record in this style seems to have at least one cover version, the Gee Strings' choice of the Nervous Eaters' "Just Head" is inspired. And when I hear the opening guitar chords to "Go Skid Rock," it makes me want to shake it for all it's worth, even though it probably shouldn't be shaken at this point. "Let's Make Up & Screw" is a title you're likely to remember and I won't snitch and say the first guitar lick sounds quite a bit like New Bomb Turks' "Professional Againster." The album ends with two more melodic songs—"Love Shock" still packs a punch but "So Messed Up," while tough, isn't that mesmerizing a conclusion, even with its Dead Boys inspiration. In any case, this is still plenty satisfying. (PO Box 361392, Cleveland, OH 44136, www.dead-beat-records.com)

HERO DISHONEST–*When the Shit Hits the Man* (ACME, CD)

When Hero Dishonest played a basement show in Boston in late '06, there wasn't necessarily shit flying but there was plenty of dust 'n' dirt. Flailing hardcore punk from the veteran Finnish crew, but with nuance. Not just thrash-a-mania. Since the last album, "Let Your Poison Scream," Hero Dishonest have shed a vocalist (it used to be a dual screamer set-up) but the sound remains as boisterous as ever. Fast, tight and navigating some wild twists and turns—for instance, there's a rhythmic tribal flavor to "Road To The Arctic Ocean." One also hears a hint of Black Flag guitar strafe—in fact, these guys have a substantial US hardcore influence. There's the obligatory cover version and it's Deep Wound's "I Saw It"—not a band everyone covers, though. The lyrics, mainly in English, have a sarcastic bent, especially when discussing certain elements of punk rock. I get the feeling they don't have a lot of patience for some folks' stridency of belief or humorlessness—kind of summed up on "Bring Your Own Toilet Paper: with "no no no, don't believe the crust/life ain't that bad, the sky won't fall/it's just too much d-beat, broken toilets, bad attitude and a wrong diet." Hero Dishonest don't merely try to fit a certain mold, opting instead to create an atmosphere of pure burn. (PO Box 441, Dracut, MA 01826, www.acmerecords.net)

PEDESTRIANS–*Ideal Divide* (A Wrench In The Gears, 12" EP)

Someone I know recently joked that Pedestrians only know one tempo but play it very well. That's true. This band stick to a medium speed but imbue it with plenty of punch and catchiness. As I've mentioned in other reviews, their songs have that tuneful yet brawny punk sound that's been a Chicago tradition for the past two decades. While there's a political angle in the lyrics, they don't hit you over the head with it although Jordan's vocals are far from passive-sounding. Bright, bristling guitars and a floor-stomping bass-drums tandem that really propel things. "Ideal Divide" will likely be Pedestrians' final release, as they called it a day during 2006. I could say something trite like "going out with a bang." Why not? That's also true. (PO Box 476903, Chicago, IL 60647)

SOCIAL CIRCKLE–*Static Eyes* (No Way, 7" EP)

Debut vinyl for Boston's Social Circkle and it's sharp, catchy punk rock. I imagine that's a catch-all, vague description. Influenced by an older west coast punk sound—think of what the Regulations or No Hope For The Kids are doing, although with a little more snottiness and not as poppy. "USSA" and "Cut Loose" have more of a UK style to them. Some hot bands have emerged around here over the past year or so and Social Circkle are definitely one of those. (www.nowayrecords.com)

THIN THE HERD–*Mournful and Overcast* (A Wrench In The Gears, LP)

Tune it low, bash it out, with crusty aplomb. A Swedish-influenced blast, accompanied by howling from a pair of vocalists (one of 'em doubles on guitar) and it's a pretty powerful assault. Only 7 songs here so it's stretched out a bit but doesn't become ponderous. Mournful and overcast fits the mood—the guitars kind of hang over everything like a thick dark cloud and the lyrics, railing against a decaying world (as you'd expect) complement the heaviness. Sometimes, such as on "Bitter Ashes," there's no buildup, just an immediate speed-driven pillage. Quite an impressive package, too, with a gatefold sleeve, haunting artwork and fold-out poster. You can't get that from an MP3 download! (PO Box 476903, Chicago, IL 60647)

VALSE TRISTE–*Madon Luku* (If Society, CD)

Bass-driven as fuck—that's the instrument that's dominant here, although there's also some six-string mangling, as it's described on the case. Bottom-heavy aggro from this long-time Finnish band. Comparisons to NoMeansNo are kind of inevitable, given that bass-dominance, but Valse Triste favor a

pure attack—not much ebb and flow or subtle shadings. These guys go from straight-ahead speed bombs to rhythmically complex arrangements. One constant is the ranting dual vocals that have the harsh inflection that's been a mainstay of Finnish hardcore. Pumping up the thunder. (PO Box 6, 00511 Helsinki, FINLAND, www.fisoceity.com)

VARIOUS–*Battle of the Worst Bands* (Noncommercial, LP)

It comes down to this—hardcore punk rock was meant to be angry, meant to be anti-social. Sure, there's room for positivity, community, etc etc but there's community in a bunch of misfits gathering together to blow off steam, to let out the rage. The Cleveland bands on this LP understood that and came around at a time in the 90s when this kind of fuzz-blare wasn't in style. The H-100s and, later, 9 Shocks Terror also drew from that well. A 12" pressing of three 7" EPs from the Darvocets (their tracks also appear on their recent Gloom CD anthology), Cider and the Ruiners. Brainwashed Youth's songs weren't released on vinyl, previously. The commonality here is the raw, in your face sound and raspy vocals, affecting an English accent for the BY and Cider songs. The first BY song is called "I Don't Really Like You" and that's an understatement. Cider and BY both have an oi-inspired sound strained through mid-western hardcore nastiness. The Ruiners opt for more of a pure hardcore approach while the Darvocets are the semi-oddballs in the bunch, especially with Larry's higher-pitched vocals. You won't forget the "I'm a little teacup" exultation at the start of their cover of the Authorities' "Radiation Masturbation" and KBD punk is part of the equation here. Damn—if I'd heard these bands earlier, there's a good chance I would have been weaned off some regrettable '90s musical pursuits. This record will hopefully wean people off '00s lameness. Well, 300 of 'em because that's all there are. (1028 Kenilworth Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113, www.noncommercialrecords.com)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH–*Totalitarian Sodomy* (Hardcore Holocaust, LP)

Intense in every facet—the music, the lyrics, the descriptions and, especially, the cover art, drawn by Sakevi from GISM. The latter element caused a delay for the album's release, since one company refused to print the cover. A demonic Bush at the center, surrounded by all sorts of chaotic imagery of fire, dead bodies, nudity, photos of Cheney, Kissinger, Anne Frank, an Israeli flag, the twin towers. A lot to take in, as are the wrenching essays that accompany the songs' lyrics in the booklet. Someone I used to work with would always mention "man's inhumanity to man" and these songs are a historical document of it—Rwanda, Armenia, China, Bosnia—the list, sadly, continues to grow. Musically, WBTD keep some of the bruising Swedish-inspired elements but there's more metal in the engine and "All The Young Turks" is a fuckin' speed metal anthem, albeit with the band's own twist on it. Hell, the concluding song "Pigs Get Fat While Hogs Get Slaughtered" is damn near catchy, riff wise—if a World Burns To Death song could ever be that way, although the hammer gets laid down as the song progresses. Jack Control's vocals convey the venom in the hoarse, angry cadence you'd expect. Worth the wait. (www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

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Now we're officially in the latter part of the decade—a decade no one has even really come up with a name for, the Oh Ohs? Zero years? I'll be happy just to see them stop making those stupid New Year's glasses. If people think of "turn of the century," the 18th going into the 19th seemed to have been much more of an exciting thing.

So it's been six years already and what do we have to show for it? I'll tell you what: morons blindly clapping along to the bass drum. Almost 30 years of punk rock and what has it sadly dwindled down to? People playing acoustic guitars and clapping like they're at a fucking Bar Mitzvah. For years the insult was calling people like this hippies, but in reality, hippies were never this boring, not even those leftover wannabe ones in the mid-'70s that disco killed off.

I think the reason everyone's so boring lately—not to mention unmotivated and stupid—is because while we do have some great things happening around us, we lack the figureheads to go along with them.

Here we go.

In 1906, you had Upton Sinclair writing *The Jungle*. First of all, there weren't any punks back then. People worked 18-hour days in a hotbox, and if you wanted the world to change for the better, you just prayed for Communism. This book was like a mass-marketing campaign for the idea. Of course, everyone just thinks of it as a book about eating sausage made out of people's fingers, but either way, do we have an Upton Sinclair? I dunno, I read 300 pages of that last Stephen King book and all that happened was someone's boob got cut off with a can opener.

In 1906, the first record player was manufactured. In 2006, I can't think of many records that came out worth playing.

Our president was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1906 for negotiating peace between Russia and Japan. In 2006 we were happy our President didn't start a war with Russia or Japan.

The world's first feature film was released 100 years ago. Last year, you could take your pick of *Big Momma's House Two, Hellraiser Four, Garfield Two, Road House Two* (Pat Swayze didn't even do that one), or the remake of the *Pink Panther.*

Sometimes I think I'm contributing to this sort of laziness myself, and you gotta point the finger at yourself when you start complaining about how the world is so boring. So here's my personal list of accomplishments for 2006:

I wrote about eight songs, I read over 100 books, I edited about 75 videos, and I did one two-week band tour and two long weekend tours. Over 30 shows total. I set up about seven or eight shows in NYC. I met a whole hell of a lot of cool new people; I started working on a book based on my old fanzine; I fixed eleven computers; and I taught myself how to record digital music and recorded part of the soon-to-be-out debut LP for LOST LOCKER COMBO. I hopefully got a little better at playing bass and maybe tried to sing a little harder. I did a recording project with two former EGGHEADs, called the PITFALLS, and I played two reunion shows with BUGOUT SOCIETY. I painted my room, and I wrote one last column.

Crap, I was all ready to make fun of myself for not really doing anything this past year, and to take blame for being a lazyass like everyone else, but actually I guess I did OK. Now it seems like I'm bragging or something. I really just can't win with this trying-to-make-a-point thing—it's not as easy as you would think!

What I'm saying is, can't someone think up something more interesting to do at a show than clap to the fucking bass drum? I mean if you go to a sports bar, they at least have wet T-shirt contests or sumo suit wrestling. It reminds me of some sort of Russian Cossack party. I mean I like Tolstoy as much as the next guy, but are we supposed to be 18th century peasants? Not only that, but in case anyone doesn't know, western civilization may claim to have won the

Cold War, but evidently NYC did not—it seems when you call Cablevision they offer phone support in English, Spanish, or Russian. I mean, who the hell would have thought Russian would have been choice three?

It's January and 70 degrees out. I'm not spending any more time on this column. I'm gonna take a walk and contemplate something better for people to do besides look like losers at someone's big fat geek wedding.

If you have any suggestions or requests for my Greedy Bastard book, kindly send em to bill@candids.com. Yes, people's home phone numbers are very welcome!

What's the latest, earth-shattering controversy in the Bay Area anarchist milieu? Is it a profound disagreement over an analysis of state power or a viable revolutionary strategy? Is it a weighty difference over what is appropriate day-to-day anarchist practice? Is it an intense dispute over how anarchists should respond to the war in Iraq or the erosion of civil liberties or police brutality in minority communities?

In your dreams!

The thing that's got the knickers of local anarchos in a twist is that the Anarchist Bookfair Committee (ABC/BT), an autonomous part of the Bound Together bookstore, expanded the 2007 book fair from one Saturday in March to two days, the weekend of March 17th and 18th. Those who put on the BASTARD (Bay Area Students of Theory and Research & Development) Conference the Sunday after the usual Saturday book fair cried foul. The BASTARDs wrote an open letter charging that the ABC/BT had made the change without first consulting Bay Area anarchists who schedule their events around the book fair date, and the far-flung vendors who set up merchandise tables at the book fair. The BASTARD letter ended with "requests" that ABC/BT make their decision-making more transparent, consult with other local anarchists before changing the book fair, and allow vendors the option of signing up for one day instead of two.

Folks to the left of the Left here really are trying to keep a straight face.

After putting on the immensely successful Without Borders anarchist continental gathering in 1989, individuals from Bound Together decided to turn their newly acquired expertise into organizing an event in 1996 that became the annual Anarchist Bookfair. The book fair did so well, and attracted so many people to the Bay Area to attend, that other local anarchists jumped on the book fair's coattails. For a while, there were Anarchist Coffee Houses, and about seven years ago the BASTARDs started doing their conferences. Presently, there's a week's worth of events scheduled around the book fair, and a few things need to be said about them.

First, none of the individuals or groups behind the non-book fair events ever asked or consulted with the book fair about scheduling or organizing their events. Second, while the ABC/BT folks were happy to see other anarchist-type events happen around their book fair, they neither officially endorsed nor worked on nor coordinated any of those events. Finally, without exception, the other anarchist events never drew more than a fraction of the attendance of the book fair.

As for the organization of the book fair, the Anarchist Bookfair Committee has always been affiliated with the Bound Together bookstore, but never subject to it. The ABC is completely autonomous, which means it makes its own decisions independent of the bookstore. In fact, individuals can be members of the ABC and work on the book fair without being members of BT. That said, the ABC/BT never actively solicited outside participation or input. This self-containment and disinterest in matters outside the book fair raised the ire of non-anarchists when, in 2006, plans for the book fair coincided with the mass anti-war demonstrations scheduled by ANSWER in San Francisco on the anniversary of the start of the Iraq war. Efforts to have ABC/BT move the book fair so as not to conflict with the demo fell on deaf ears, and the book fair organizers were accused of divisiveness, sectarianism, and a desire to stick it to the Leninist asswipes behind ANSWER. Those criticisms have resurfaced this year because the book fair once again overlaps with ANSWER's plans to sponsor their anti-war events on the exact same weekend in March.

To rephrase, those who regularly attend ABC/BT meetings work on the book fair. In turn, the ABC/BT adheres to the idea of workers' control, that those who work on organizing the book fair have the right to make all the decisions concerning the book fair. At first blush, the BASTARD letter would seem to raise an equally valid, and frequently conflicting anarchist principle of workers' control, that of community control. The ABC/BT anarchists are part of a larger Bay Area anarchist community, so the argument goes, and therefore should consult with and defer to that community in making decisions about the book fair.

Invoking some mythic, feel-good anarchist community, however, does not make that community a reality. Indeed, BASTARD's own actions belie the existence of any community among Bay Area anarchists. Quick to insist that ABC/BT consult other anarchist "comrades" when BASTARD's conference ox was gored by the decision to run the book fair for two days, BASTARD completely ignored the outrage of many in the anarchist "community" when they scheduled police snitch Bob Black to speak at their conference last year. Thus, BASTARD's talk of anarchist comradeship and community is utter bullshit.

The other issue raised in the BASTARD letter, that ABC/BT failed to consult with vendors who set up tables at the book fair, is also equally bogus. It was the book fair vendors themselves, many of whom travel long distances to set up for a one-day event, who suggested making the book fair two days. Out of fifty-odd vendors, only two approached ABC/BT directly to voice concerns that a two-day book fair would cause them problems, and ABC/BT immediately accommodated their concerns. Oddly enough, even though the BASTARDs decry "uncritically embrac[ing] the development of anarchist shop keepers at the expense of other aspects of anarchist activity," they go on to admit that their main conflict with a two-day book fair is that many members of the BASTARD organizing group are vendors at the book fair, as are many of the presenters at the conference. Were Marx witness to this bit of hypocrisy, he would correctly label the BASTARD mentality *petit bourgeois* in the extreme.

Finally, there's the way in which BASTARD chose to address their differences with ABC/BT. A BASTARD representative attended a Bound Together bookstore collective meeting, instead of going directly to the Anarchist Bookfair Committee meeting. Then the representative BASTARD said that he would read their open letter out loud, but that he would only allow "clarifying questions" afterwards. This numbnuts insisted that, because BASTARD as a group was entirely ad hoc, it didn't really exist, and that he was not really a representative of BASTARD, so he couldn't talk to Bound Together, but only read the open letter written by a group that didn't really exist. That went over as well as you might expect, and

anarchists being anarchists, the Bound Together folks proceeded to rip the BASTARD rep a new asshole, after letting him read his letter, of course.

Not getting the response they'd hoped for from BT, the BASTARDs then posted their open letter all around the internet, thinking to elicit sympathetic outrage over ABC/BT's book fair process and decision. That also didn't work out quite as planned. By my admittedly subjective count, comments defending ABC/BT and attacking BASTARD have predominated in a rather feeble debate. A disturbing sideshow to the BASTARD internet campaign has been the expression of the usual conspiracy idiocy based on the charge that ABC/BT's actions represent the triumph of shopkeeper anarchism.

According to the anarcho-conspiracy buffs in question, it was actually AK Press's idea to extend the book fair to two days because AK Press has the most tables, merchandise and sales at the book fair. And, "as everyone knows," AK Press secretly controls the BT book fair committee or the BT bookstore or both. AK Press is further derided as the Nike of anarchism whose monopolistic marketing practices drive other anarchist distributors like Left Bank out of business, and whose success depends on paying its collective members shit wages while not paying its authors at all.

These very well might be legitimate criticisms of AK Press's business practices. Yet, in this context, they are used to bolster the idea that an ultra-capitalistic AK Press is manipulating its sock puppet Bound Together in a sinister conspiracy to maximize profits at the book fair at the expense of the much nobler pursuit of knowledge and discourse as epitomized by the BASTARD conference. Complete nonsense.

For their part, the BASTARDs insist that they won't give in to this anarchist shopkeeper mentality and so will hold their conference on Sunday, March 18, come what may. Of course, that means that now the BASTARD conference is also in direct conflict with the ANSWER-sponsored anti-war demo, scheduled for Sunday in San Francisco. True to my hooligan tendencies, I do delight in seeing how well BASTARD's idyllic anarchist community functions. I also gloat that the anarcho-dilettante who called my columns sectarian at last year's book fair, and who I took to task a few columns ago, is one of the main BASTARDs denouncing "the rise of the age of the anarchist merchant" and conducting internet jihad against ABC/BT. A sterling example of the pot calling the kettle sectarian.

My greatest pleasure, though, comes from seeing how weak the controversy is, despite all of BASTARD's efforts to the contrary. There's not a whole lot of flaming outrage going on in various anarcho forums or IndyMedia or InfoShop about BASTARD's po' widdow conference getting trampled by that evil Bound Together/AK Press capitalist cabal. It's truly a tempest in a teacup, perhaps because everybody else realizes that a two-day Anarchist Book Fair will neither conflict with ANSWER's anti-war demo nor hurt the BASTARD conference. If anything, a two-day book fair will bring more people to town for the weekend, more people who can then participate in all three events at their leisure.

This should be a no-brainer.

Not that my former haunt, the ultraleft, doesn't have its share of incredible assholes. Remind me sometime to talk about left communism's drunken, venomous one-man-sect I affectionately call K-Squared. I attended two different years of the BASTARD conference. It's a glorified, pseudo-academic circlejerk in my estimation. I might get roped in to tabling for comrades at the Anarchist Bookfair again this year. There's a lot more entertainment value at the book fair, but I don't think I could handle more than a day of that lifestyle zoo. What the whole book fair brouhaha unfortunately points up is the oh-so-sad state of anarchism in this country.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.

My son is now one month old. He was born on December 5, 2006 and we named him Stigandr Forest Larson. There hasn't been a whole lot of punk rock in my life this past month, but there has been a whole lot of baby time. The lack of sleep is the cruelest joke of motherhood. I was lucky the first week or so that Stig just slept and slept, but then one day he woke up and since then has never wanted to go back to sleep. Of course that isn't entirely true. He has good days and bad days. Days when he won't sleep for more that 10 to 20 minutes at a time, when he screams and cries and fusses and nothing will work to calm him. And then he has days where he is the cutest thing I've ever seen and he sleeps, lets me sleep and is absolutely delightful. Of course the bad days are forgotten on the good days. And the lack of sleep is forgotten after a good three-hour stretch of sleep. Gone are those long nights of nine hours of sleep in the big bed. Now it's catnaps on the couch. But much as I might want to rip out my hair on the bad days, much like childbirth, the hardest parts are somehow forgotten in the long run.

The biggest thing that I have learned and adjusted to is that you can plan all you want, but things will go as they do, not necessarily as you would have them. I am a practical person, and all through my pregnancy, every time someone asked me what my plans were for this or that aspect of childbirth, working, or life in general, all I could say was, "Well, I'm planning to do this...but we'll see," knowing that anything could come up or happen. And as it turned out, for all my planning, and all that I did not plan, Stig came along three weeks early. My water broke, but then the contractions didn't come. I had to get a labor accelerator drug to bring the contractions on, but twelve hours later that wasn't going quite as it was supposed to either. In the end, my plans for natural childbirth, and my stubbornness about no pain medication was laid to waste, as there was no way that I could carry on through the labor, being both mentally and physically exhausted with little to show for it.

Thirty-six hours later, after a whole bunch of drugs, needles, and even forceps, my son stubbornly came into the world. I wanted a natural childbirth, but my body or my baby just wasn't having it, and in hindsight there is no way that I would have been able to deliver under the circumstances without the drugs. I thought I'd never give my baby a pacifier, but when he's fussing and wants to suck, the pacifier works and I gave in. I planned to use cloth diapers and I still want to. I think that disposable diapers are horrible—they're expensive and they take up so much space in the landfill. But Stig was too small for the cloth diapers that I had, so I kept on using the disposable ones I got started on in the hospital. I haven't given up yet, but the few times I've tried the cloth, it just don't work for him nearly as well. I thought that I would want a friend in the delivery room with me, but when the time came, I didn't want anyone else around. I thought I'd be listening to Hellshock and Tragedy as inspiration for childbirth, but there was no music system in the hospital. I thought that the baby sling was the ultimate way to carry a baby, but the Baby Bjorn carrier is just as handy, if not more so. In other words, nothing has really gone quite how I thought, even knowing that "anything could happen." The only thing that has worked out as planned has been breastfeeding. At least the

boobs work.

I make jokes, and what else can I do? I'm not quite the Earth mama that I thought I would be. I go stir crazy if I'm in the house for more than two days at a time, mostly because I spend so much time on the couch, nursing, napping, and nesting in front of the TV. I am able to get some things done, but not for very long stretches of time. Even writing this short column was interrupted several times by the crying baby. I might still get a lot of reading done (I logged in a personal record of 67 books read in 2006), but sometimes I can't nurse and read at the same time, and it's easier to just watch TV. I have to remember that it's not just about me now, and that if the kid doesn't want me to read, then I have to stop.

It's not like I'm just giving in to doing the easiest thing, 'cause the easiest isn't always the best. I've often criticized the attitude of doing things purely out of convenience—which is also usually more wasteful and costly of other resources. I'm still not stoked about the disposable diapers, and I really do hope that I can get the cloth ones to work in the long run. It's amazing how you can have an idea about how things will be and they can turn around and be so different. In this case, I was as practical and as open as I could be. But now, I don't look at myself as a failure for having to get an epidural—instead, it was what I needed to get the job done. And I know I can't beat myself up for the various other things that haven't gone quite as I might have thought. Sometimes you just have to put the preconceived ideas out of your head and accept that things may go in a direction you didn't plan. Fortunately, my baby and me are both healthy and doing fine, and that is what is important right now. These little adjustments that we make along the way are really not that big of a deal in the end, and if they are, well, I just make the best decisions that I can, one day at a time.

I am not planning to make my column a parenting column. I don't think that most of the readers of MRR want to read more about punk parents (though perhaps I'm wrong, who knows). I accept that things are going to be different from me from here on out. I think I'm going to go back to work next month, but maybe I'll find that doesn't work out for one reason or another. I am planning to resume regular publishing of my zine, *Slug & Lettuce*, in the spring, but who knows? Things are so different these days, and I don't mean just in my life with my new son—I mean things are very different in the zine world and the punk community. The purpose that was once served by *S&L* is not quite what it once was. Consequently, it's much harder to financially keep it going. The feedback that I get tells me that it is important, and so I want to keep at it. But in the end, that decision will be as much in your hands as it will my son's. I'm open to just about anything right now, including dramatic decisions that I might have not before considered. I don't know what will happen tomorrow, let alone next month or later this year. So we will take it all one day at a time.

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chris1slug@hotmail.com

My Last Column

"I am a mediocre writer." That was my first disclaimer when I started writing a column in *MRR* over three years ago. However, I always believed there is something to be said about enthusiasm for one's subject. After all, isn't that what punk rock is all about? So what if you didn't take guitar lessons—that shouldn't keep you from starting a fucking raging hardcore band (I recommend the bass). Just because I grew up in a shitty California public school system doesn't mean I can't write a decent column about hardcore. In cases like this, enthusiasm and veracity can usually trump mediocre talent. But what happens when you lose the enthusiasm and you start dreading the deadline? Well, then it is time to hang up your boots. Without the drive, I can no longer justify the fact that this takes me three times longer than it should to write. Rather than have this be a chore, I am calling it quits. This is my last column. Let me clarify that I have not lost my enthusiasm for hardcore and punk, just my enthusiasm for writing about it. Thanks to everyone who stuck around for the last three years. Keep the faith.

Book Your Tickets

Friend/promoter/all-around good dude Timmy Hefner has just confirmed the partial line-up for 2007's *Chaos in Tejas Festival*. During the weekend of May 17th-19th in Austin, Texas, the following bands have been scheduled to play: THE KIDS (that's right, the legendary band from Belgium!), HARD SKIN, BORN DEAD ICONS, SEX VID, PELIGRO SOCIAL, PUNCH IN THE FACE, THE MARKED MEN, IRON AGE, and more. Some might be interested that there is a strong possibility of an EYEHATEGOD reunion. This will be the only US appearance for THE KIDS, so don't sleep on getting a plane ticket for this.

A few months earlier, another great fest will be happening to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of Youngblood Records. All the Youngblood bands on the current roster will be playing (LIGHTS OUT, LION OF JUDAH, FIRED UP, IRON AGE, MIND ERASER), as well the almighty STRIKING DISTANCE, who are reuniting for the show. If you're like me and think STRIKING DISTANCE were one of the best American hardcore bands of the last six years, then this is huge news. That's why when OUR TURN, my old band, was also asked to do a reunion for the anniversary, we jumped at the chance. Not only is everyone in OUR TURN excited to share the stage with Dave Byrd and crew, but also it's been a couple years since we called it quits, and we figure there are a few (maybe three or four) interested kids that didn't get to check us out the first time around. The show is on Sat., March 31st, at Championship Records in Lemoyne, PA. All in all, it should be pretty fun.

Send one last hate mail letter to: Carl Cordova, 746 Baker St., SF, CA 94115

I've been covering some divergent topics lately, so I'd like to get back to one of my recurring favorites—early '80s DC hardcore. Over the past year or so I've been trying to supplement the historical record laid down in *Dance of Days* and *Banned in DC* with some discussion of the records that made the DC hardcore scene one of the greatest ever.

This month I'm going to talk about two records that came along a little later in the heroic era of Dischord Records: Scream's *Still Screaming* and Marginal Man's *Identity*. These two LPs show the development of hardcore from its raw and primal punk roots to when it began to embrace more sophisticated songwriting, varied influences, and a degree of maturity. But both of these records are still close enough to the roots of 1981 DC hardcore that they are uncontrollable ragers.

Scream hailed from suburban Bailey's Crossroads in Virginia (hence the BXR on the center labels of their LP). They were not really a big part of the early Dischord scene and are one of the DC bands notably absent from the *Flex Your Head* comp. The story is that being from the suburbs they took a while to

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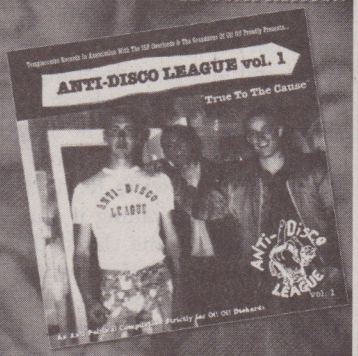

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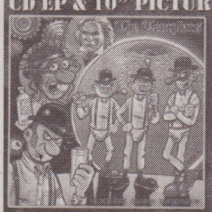

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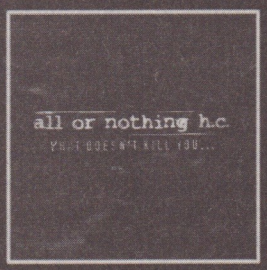

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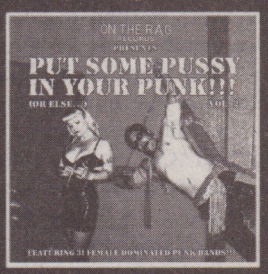

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get noticed by the DC hardcore scene. This relative isolation, however, perhaps led to the band developing a unique sound and supreme musical chops. Scream recorded their first LP for Dischord, *Still Screaming*, in 1982, and it was released later that year. Even at the time, some die-hards thought it was "too rock" or "too melodic," though simultaneously bands like 7 Seconds and Descendents were making melodic hardcore quite popular and it was not too long before bands like SSD, DYS, and the FU's would "go rock." To my mind this is a perfect record. There is a great mix of fast hardcore, anthemic sing-along melodic punk, and even some slow reggae-influenced material. As we discussed in talking about Bad Brains, reggae was a big influence on DC hardcore and Scream was one of the few US bands that made the reggae sound actually work with hardcore punk without sounding forced or corny.

This LP starts with some guitar feedback doing a "bomb drop" and rips into a fast hardcore song, "Came Without Warning," about a nuclear attack. While a lot of early hardcore bands emphasized speed and blazing delivery, the members of Scream were excellent players and even the fast thrashy songs had intense build-ups, sick bridges, and wailing rock influenced leads. Compared to the neanderthal poundings of SOA or Iron Cross, these guys were creating symphonic arrangements. The production on this record is flawless—another Don Zientara/Inner Ear joint. The guitar sounds like it was recorded "Live at Budokan" and the whole LP has a "big rock" sound that works great with the material. Scream's singer Pete Stahl often actually sang rather than just shouting and screaming, and the band had some really good vocal arrangements. Scream used some great backing vocals, call-and-response choruses, and some "woooaah ooooaaah" sing-alongs which were starting to become popular in hardcore at the time. The sing-along choruses on "Your Wars" and "Piece of Her Time" are some of the most catchy of the genre. And the call-and-response parts of "New Song" and "Cry Wolf" are just as powerful. I saw Scream dozens of times from 1983 onwards and I was one of the kids in the audience singing along to those songs. There are a few slow jams on this record and two reggae influenced songs. I'm not too crazy about slow songs or bands mixing reggae into hardcore, but Scream pulled it off where most bands would have flopped. Like Bad Brains, they used the slow reggae numbers of amplify the intensity of the fast songs that bracketed them.

Scream's lyrics were criticized at the time for being simplistic and some of the songs about girls/relationships/sex were controversial as such topics were never terribly in vogue for hardcore. Re-reading them today they don't seem much worse/better than most hardcore punk bands. The main thing in my mind is their delivery. At those shows back in the day we were all singing along and I can still remember most of the words 25 years later. So maybe they weren't PhD-level lyrics, but most of them captured teen frustration, alienation, and a sense of outrage at the fucked up political situation in Reagan's America that seem sincere enough for me to sing along.

Scream recorded a second LP, *This Side Up*, which featured a second guitar player, and they stepped up the rock influence in their sound and dispensed with most of the fast hardcore influence. They also recorded a pretty tight 7" called *Walking by Myself*, but I feel that both of those lack the power and energy of the first LP which is just a non-stop ripper. Scream had a later career as a rock band and one of the later members famously joined Nirvana. The Nirvana dude didn't have anything to do with the *Still Screaming* LP though, and this is the first and last word in raging DC hardcore from Scream. Crank it up!

Next on deck is Marginal Man's *Identity* LP. I wrote about this record back in *MRR* #216, but feel it should be revisited in the context of early DC hardcore records, the current theme.

Marginal Man formed out of ex-members of the band Artificial Peace. The new band left most of the high speed thrash sound and direct political lyrics behind for a more introspective lyrical focus and more structured and melodic compositions. That said, this is far from a weak record. In fact, I'd put this at the very top of "melodic hardcore" records, above output from bands like 7 Seconds and SNFU. Some of the songs on this record are actually quite slow like "Torn Apart" but they are still intensely powerful and Steve's vocals and lyrics carry what would have possibly been much weaker songs.

This record was recorded and released in 1983—yet another Don Zientara/Inner Ear masterpiece. Let's all remember that these titanic hardcore records of the heroic Dischord era were recorded in Don's basement on a four-track! Today we have so much more technology available and huge amounts of money are spent in the studio to record hardcore records. But these early Dischord jams prove that the right combination of skills, talent, and dedication can produce records with the simplest equipment that will stand the test of time.

Like a lot of the later DC hardcore bands, Marginal Man had two guitar players. The dual-guitar sound allowed for a lot of melodic, almost surf-style picking over a straightforward hardcore riff. The majority of the songs on *Identity* are mid-tempo-to-fast hardcore punk with a great deal of melody in the guitar that the singer is just good enough to keep up with. Steve's voice is still in the harsh hardcore punk vocal style rather than Pete from Scream's actual singing. The slightly more gruff vocal delivery, though, is a good counterbalance to the more melodic elements of the songs that helps keep the record grounded in more powerful hardcore sounds and from drifting into bad melodic pop-hardcore territory.

Lyrically this was an extremely influential record. The band's name "Marginal Man" came from a psychology textbook dealing with alienation. Steve Polcari's lyrics dealt almost entirely with emotional and personal issues. This record was the first record called "emotional hardcore," a term later used to describe Rites of Spring and Embrace, and one that somehow many years later was shorted to "emo" to describe all kinds of wretched pop music. Listening to the delivery, you can feel that Steve is sincere about the emotions he's singing about, but personally I'm not too crazy about these kind of lyrical topics. It worked out OK for Marginal Man, but almost every other band to go down this road winds up sounding weak and stupid.

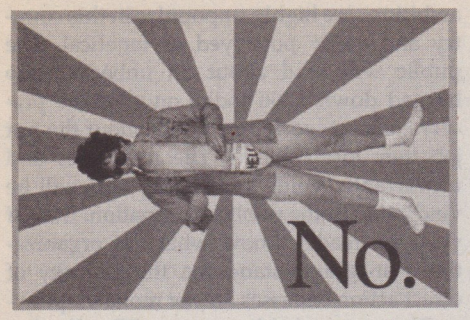
As much as I love this record, I'd have to say that its influence on hardcore was quite negative, as almost every band that tried to imitate this sound wound up doing bland and corny melodic hardcore, or worse, emo rock. As is often the case, the originators get the formula right but none of the imitators can successfully duplicate it.

Marginal Man released a second LP that is OK, but not nearly as powerful as this one. Both have been reissued on CD. The Scream LP noted above is also available on a CD with the second Scream LP. These are fairly common used records that you could probably find in the $15 range with a little effort—a most rewarding effort indeed.

I'd have to say that this was one of the last truly great hardcore records on Dischord as well. It kind of marks a turning point between original early-'80s hardcore and bands that took that sound to a new level. A few of the successive bands were good and played with legitimate dedication—most notably Rites of Spring. But most of the rest strayed a little too far from the roots of hardcore for my taste. While they created new musical styles that have been commercially and critically successful, they just don't rage the way the early Dischord bands did.

From the song "Marginal Man"...

Eyes straight ahead, I got my feet on the ground
Noise all around me, I don't hear a sound
Viewing life from a window pane
I'm outside looking in....



I recently jumped headfirst into the odd, odd world of getting a shrink. Despite being a punk for around fifteen years, clinging desperately to long-held rejections of organized religion and the less-appealing trappings of so-called adulthood, I realized that there are certain things in my life which make me distinctly unhappy and I wanted to know more about why. Sometimes, shitty patterns emerge as one grows older, and when they affect a person and the ones around them enough, an urgency to address these patterns and figure out where they are coming from often begins to emerge. Aided by my newfangled medical insurance (the first time I've had it in a decade, thanks to returning to college), I decided to see if I could deal with my mounting personal problems using psychology, that time-tested tool of secular, modern liberal life.

There's a psychology "game" that my therapist uses where her patient rates their tolerance of various daily situations they find themselves in on a one-to-ten scale, with a ranking of one being the least tolerable and ten being the most. As of late, I feel as though the average day in my American life has come to be far more dominated by situations on the lower end of this scale, despite the fact that my life has changed little. Such mundane bullshit as traffic, petty fights with my friends/housemates/girlfriend, unexpected work, TV commercials, and Christmas music all make me livid; this causes me to often overreact to such a degree that the situation is made measurably worse than it was to begin with. Of course, this is not healthy, and a sane American has long been taught to question exactly what it is that is wrong with them that brought about this sort of reaction and result. This attitude is part of the rubric of personal responsibility that America was built on, and allows for the mentality of rugged individualism to triumph in a national culture in which the will to succeed against all odds is considered the holiest of virtues. If we fail, we are to accept with open arms the gutter we are unceremoniously dropped into, and either look forward to the glorious afterlife of the righteous or meditate ourselves into peaceful slumber, blissfully accepting and indifferent to the problems of the world around us. This is the modern American sanity. We are not supposed to be angry past a certain point in our lives, we are not supposed to fight the inevitable, and we are definitely not supposed to revolt.

As an individual, however, I suppose I am not particularly sane in this sense. I do not have faith in concepts such as fate, normalcy, or angels, I tend to search for real-world answers to real-world stresses and problems—and the answers to these problems are not always found within myself, either. This is not to say that many of my problems cannot be traced to some personal stupidity, particularly in my sometimes shitty attitude towards people I love. This attitude, however, can be at least partially traced to stress originating from outside my own head, sometimes making me a worse person than I feel I actually am. Thus, in the process of taking stock and looking at my problems and the problems I am presented with, I have rationally come to a conclusion that my shrink (or her old-fashioned counterpart, a priest) would likely think is very counterproductive. In other words, I don't think I am crazy for saying this: For the first time possibly since the Great Depression, America, and the world as a whole (particularly those parts of it most affected by America and its business/social policies) is getting worse. Much worse.

As a student of archaeology (and, correspondingly, world history) I can state with some confidence that periods of absolute material excess in complex societies, beyond the means presented by their resources, tend to indicate a corresponding absolute decline in those societies often followed by their total dissolution. By excess, I do not speak of the supposed "moral" excesses that religions yammer on and on about—a rational person can see that the existence of homosexuality and the legality of abortion are certainly not what will bring about the end—but of the literal, real-world material (and, to my values, moral) excess made possible by extreme overexploitation of labor and resources. Hell, in this sense, homosexuality and abortion may be some of the only means to slow down overpopulation, one of the biggest roots of this excess leading to societal collapse. The end I am talking about does not mean an apocalypse in the biblical sense, it does not mean that the people themselves disappear (though many certainly tend to die in the process, historically speaking), but it means that a way of life comes to an end.

I think the American way of life is soon to end. In the San Francisco Bay Area where I live, purportedly a hotbed of progressive sentiment where the vast majority of people consider themselves environmentalists, the freeways are clogged with gas-sucking SUVs. These SUVs are driven by people who likely voted for gun control, but who become such sociopaths behind the wheel that they will nearly kill people every day making driving decisions fueled by the absolute fury of the overworked, stressed-out, apathetic American middle class. The concept of personal responsibility in America has effectively translated to getting as much as one can for oneself and one's progeny as possible during a lifetime, and fuck everyone else. The worst part of this is that these are mostly not, on the whole, bad people—they are just doing exactly what they have been taught to do their entire lives, and even when they are aware of it they have to do it anyway as a matter of survival. This is because of the nature of our economy, and economies are ultimately what make or break complex societies.

Our economy in the USA is set up to maximize profit for corporate shareholders at all costs and to avoid accountability as much as possible in the service of this goal. This is legally required, and a CEO can be jailed for consciously failing to take any opportunity possible to maximize profits. This business model filters down to almost all facets of our economy and society, and will, frankly, never be voted out of existence. It has now been picked up by nearly every other large economy in the world in a hegemonic expansion of our system (hegemony, by the way, essentially means the expansion of an outside, dominant system or idea that is so powerful that people actually want to be dominated by it—even if destroys them). What does this mean? It means everyone who can do so eats everything and everyone else alive, gluttonously and well beyond their needs, at a rate never seen before on this planet—and they do so as a matter of survival. This Globalism is not going to go away, and it means the end of the tattered remnants of past ideals of community, which were made more sustainable by commonality of culture and relative isolation of societies due to less-sophisticated communications and transport technology. When America economically collapses (probably relatively soon, and after only a few hundred years!), China will immediately race to the fore, then they will collapse before long in turn for using essentially the same unsustainable system.

What this means, to me, is that our pace of technological advancement has outpaced our cultural and mental development. If anything, we're devolving, or at least arresting our own growth as a species in the service of aggression for personal gain. As apes, we evolved with a reduced-size canine tooth in males, the only ape to have this trait. Most others have huge, dagger-like canines. The reason? Most physical anthropologists think it is because we are more successful as a species when we cooperate, thus leading

females to sexually select (in our evolutionary past) for males less naturally proportioned to use physical force and aggression as a tool in human culture. I keep wondering when these teeth are going to start to make a comeback; probably around the time the final stock market crash hits and electricity goes out for 99% of the world, and money does not directly equate as power and/or a weapon so much anymore.

My conclusion: At the moment, we're fucked. Not something my shrink, or loved ones wanting to make small talk, want to hear. You know what, though? I don't care if I'm nuts. I'll keep screaming out in the darkness, keep a shard of hope for new and radical ideas, I'll live as a modern American and an adult but I will never fully capitulate and I will remain awake, aware, and vocal. I'll never meditate, in my relatively comfortable surroundings, on top of a growling heap of the world's worst problems, most of which have not affected me directly (yet). Zoloft or Prozac will not take them away, and I won't give it a chance to try. These things will not change from within me, and they will not change thanks to fate, "God," or some ridiculous angels; they will only change if people are angry and incensed enough to change them, and I have no plans or desire to stop being angry about them myself. I do not want to be pacified, and if that makes me crazy, then being crazy feels damned good. Hey, maybe the psychotherapy is working after all!

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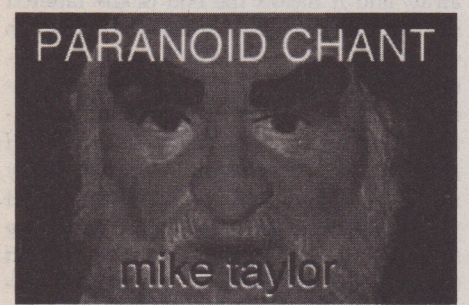
Old columns/archive online at Rupert Murdoch's (you wanna talk about hegemony? How many of us have a MySpace page?) www.myspace.com/noarchive



The War on Error

The scene is any metropolitan hub; specifics matter not. Tall anonymous buildings. A brutalist skyline ridden with automotive traffic. Tweak the microscope's lens and we're on the sidewalk, alive with foot traffic. It seems to be lunchtime in the city.

Stern, balding men with briefcases bark into cell phones, buying low and selling high; suits in pairs volley after work plans in a brisk monotone while stepping into the sidewalk. A traffic cop waves people on with a frantic right hand.

A concussive thud precedes the cacophony of breaking glass and panicked screams. Masonry crumbles and whole reams of paper rain onto the sidewalk from where the upper floors were not thirteen seconds ago. People are running everywhere and already the sirens are nearing.

Everyone goes running for the punk on the sidewalk. Plaintive businessmen and cops drawing their pistols. The needle drags across a very expensive thrash 7" and I'm all like, *what?!?*

Not to compose a simple inter-office memo, but I believe this needs to be discussed. I'd like all the punks worldwide to know that the cover of the new MRR *Public Safety* compilation LP does not necessarily reflect the views of all magazine contributors. The drawing is a self-congratulatory piece of faux paranoia. I can gently promise you that at the moment when *the shit goes down* in any major city, the smoke will not clear to reveal a red-handed band of renegade punxes.

Punxes tend to not commit acts of terrorism. You know this. Punx shoplift, vandalize, drink in public, download music illegally and are general nuisances, but do *not* commit large-scale acts of public terror. It tends to not happen. It *has*, I'm sure. But don't fool yourself.

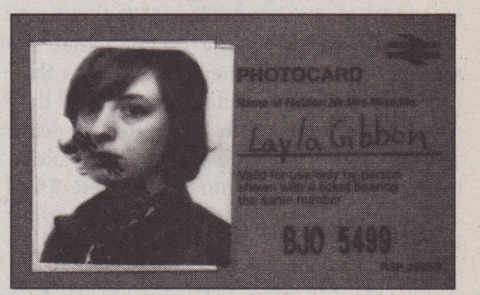
Now, if this image were to be occurring in the context of large-scale protest, it would be a less laughable and more typical scene of punk-as-political-radical-in-upheaval. Punks do, historically, participate in large-scale spectacular protest. In the months after the WTO shutdown and subsequent actions surrounding the RNC and IMF, wearing your freak flag was probable cause for a pig shakedown. However, the context of the drawing is punk-as-victim in the era of Homeland Security. That is where the muck becomes embarrassing and borderline offensive. The victims in the war against terror are ethnically delineated. "Muslim" and "Arab" merge into one identity as ignorant shorthand for "fanatic," while all dark-skinned, but not "black," immigrants are potential illegals, and thus likely internal threats to US corporate/White hegemony. It would insult your intelligence to draw generalizations about punk's ethnic composition and class background. Thus, the image of the gun being drawn on the innocent (white?) punk lady in the seconds following an ostensibly politically motivated bombing (that's the subtext, correct?) is more than a little hard to swallow.

Homeland Security's high profile captures are animal rights and environmental activists not only because these people mean business and their tactics are serious and often get concrete results* but also, their ambitions are highly unpopular in this country and easily portrayed as fanatical. The public will read about an imbecile who burned down a ski lodge on a nature preserve, and at work they'll talk about the nut job they just collared. The trespasses and unwarranted raids and roving taps will be vindicated in the public imagination. Even if you, the reader, know what the organization's anagrams stand for, the majority of direct action badasses are *not* mohawk punxes. They are probably not even CD collection punxes.

Readers of MRR should be politically aware. They should be opposed to not only the very concept of power-based authority and the prejudice with which it is enforced, but also the particularly counter-democratic bent of the US government, as well as its insane imperial adventuring. However, it does no one any good to conjure an imaginary persecution.

Mike Taylor: PO Box 28226, Providence RI 02908

*Once again, whoever subscribed me to *Green Anarchy*, cut it out. I'm not always in agreement with ALF or ELF tactics and I am firmly opposed to the call to Decivilization.



I was informed by the powers that be that my year end top ten couldn't include whimsical *HeartattaCk* zine style anecdotes and had to be limited to music released by punks in '06. Being that as well as having a year end top ten I also have this entire column with which to impart all of my whimsical *HeartattaCk*-style anecdotes, I am able to subvert their cruel limitations. And of course make endless jokes at their expense. But, uh, bear in mind that I am writing this from a motel room in Arizona while my mum watches *The Daily Show*, which is a little distracting. So my anecdotes may not be as heartwarming or whimsical as they would have been had I been hitchhiking to a Plan-It-X fest or moshing at an Avail show or whatever else the writers of *HaC* have been up to in '06. Also bear in mind that most of '06 was spent in my room, alone, Brian Wilson style—interspersed of course with random Raging Good Times.

First Raging Good Times mention goes to the following email, penned by the mighty

Gnar of course in regards to a certain late-'80s hardcore revival. Email of the year! And we didn't go to the Gorilla Biscuits show in the end. It turned out we were too tired and it was raining and the show was at a random hesh venue in the middle of nowhere. After all three of us hustled all of our formerly sXe warrior icon contacts for guest-list places for weeks. The big plan was to go see Gorilla Biscuits then go see Team Dresch and write a compare-and-contrast report on audience stylings. Didn't happen. Not that sad because I don't like either band.

"I've been thinking all day (in preparation for the cruciality that will be the Gorilla Biscuits show) that it's not fair that moronic edge dudes got control of the phrase 'youth crew.' You know what I mean? Basically, I would like to claim the phrase youth crew to mean radical punx committed to youthful adventure and camaraderie, not brotherhood mind you, but more just like kickin' it with your friends and having fun instead of getting all sweaty in quasi-violent, totally homoerotic monkey dance formations. All I'm saying is that when separated from Chain of Strength style meanings, the phrase 'youth crew' sounds like it could actually be something really cool."

So who wants to pass on this new definition to the 50th wave of youth crew revivalists? They'll have to find another youth movement I guess, now that their revival of a revival has been declared redundant or rather reclaimed by thee punx.

New and Exciting Experiences in Music award goes to a few bands, but as for touring bands I would have to hand it to Finally Punk and Kiosk! Seriously. So fucking great!! The show at Mama Buzz was beyond intensive, the reconstituted Oakland city biodiesel bus outside featured a live show by Evil Wikked Warrior, noise fiends with an 11 year-old girl singer who has this rad cool kickbacked Kim Gordon thing about her, the whole bus shaking with frenzy and delight. Then inside for Kiosk, Australian fierceness, like Lydia Lunch, Sonic Youth-era (dude what's with the SY references!!), dark landscapes but punker, not so AmReptiled. The singer has this howl that makes you check for desert landscapes and the tuning of guitar really makes it... The drums have that disco punk thing but somehow they fuck it up so it doesn't make you wanna puke. Plus you are on some Manson family summer camp rather than cocaine white horse doom as those beats usually infer. Anyways... Then when it couldn't get any better, Finally Punk came on—the first true post Mika Miko band? An all girl teenage (?) sensation that will make you wish you hadn't wasted your precious ear time on endless boring teen dude Circle Jerks rehashes. Tobi wrote about how they were the kind of band Bikini Kill wanted to inspire, and yet I think it's rad that it took Mika Miko to make girls realise their potential power and sound... Finally Punk are really fuckin great, like watching fireworks, instruments switch round, spells and incantations, ridiculous references, uh, just rad. Like Meltdown/Scissor Girls but not with the dark forestry, more like a run-thru-the-beach-at-night, pissin-on-hippies sunrise is now.... uh!! Yeah, Kleenex too, but really: all girls must form bands!!! Then the house show: final Club Short eviction party—let's wipe out the community and install the requisite yuppies scenario, and all I have to say is kids not condos!! The show was total radness, kids climbin thru the windows, dancing, sweating, exploding, the George Chen free box, total annihilation is now... Of course you must send off for CD-Rs and 7"s of these bands; Kill Rock Stars carries it all I am pretty sure.

Bummer of the year goes to the All Growed Up business card punk record collector. What is it with lame hardcore boys with straight man "proper" jobs, like punk is their "spare time" "weekend" activity when they aren't closing deals and making sure the Singapore account is OK with the final draft? It's like a box you check on an internet dating site in the interests section. I mean, fuck that! I am not saying you have to spend your whole life destitute and ground down by your minimum wage job...but you are the same as the lame shits who puke in alleyways behind theme bars still in their business suits, closing deals, making eyes at the chicks in accounts. Except you spend $100 on that first press Poison Idea *Pick Your King*. Basically you are only distinguished from yuppie douchebags by *what you buy*, which is not punk. I also hate people that give up on punk and accept their shitty lot in life, and go off to die in bars each night after a day at their shitty pick 'n' pack minimum wage life. It just feels like people give up. Both lifestyle options mentioned are a fucking copout.

Best Birthday Frenzy of the year goes to the Erin Yanke Beach Fest '06. I taught some frat girls the art of making fire—always a good thing to know, especially should you find yourself going back in time to the era of the Neanderthal, unable to make fire, you are sure to freeze to death. Luckily should those chicks find themselves in such a situation, they will be able to figure it out for themselves. There was a Germs burn in the sky around the moon, only one person puked in the sand, and there weren't too many harsh Fallopian Jungle 'Nam-style flashbacks.

Best New Local Band, obviously Peligro Social. HR from Bad Brains mixed with RIP-style Spanish punk is clearly the way forward for street punk. The girl in the white jump suit with painted blood all over it that looked like she had stepped out of a '79 Screamers audience doing the worm clearly also set the pace for all future mosh pit actions. This band is best experienced live; even when they are too wasted to play, they have the magical ability to blow minds.

Anyway, all my *HaC* style anecdotal-ness has been drained from me by a five-hour drive through the desert, but don't worry my friends, I will be back next month with further dispatches from my learnings on life. No top ten this month because I have mostly been rocking out to the sounds of my family talking to me. And my mum singing along with Route 66 oldies radio. And telling a sordid Velvet Underground anecdote to me mates.

This being my first column for *MRR*, I thought I would discuss a couple of topics that are at the forefront of my warped mind and have been for some time: the dual issues of how the punk/HC scene has changed in the past ten-to-fifteen years, and how that relates to the Worldwide HC movement.

I got into punk fairly young (at 12 or 13), and have at this point in my life spent significantly more time in the punk scene that I have lived outside of it, which is a fucking frightening notion to me. When I realized this a while ago, I was at first shocked. Just like I am shocked when I realize a record I am playing came out ten years ago. There is also the degree of frustration I have felt with elements of the punk scene over the years, and that I still feel drawn to it is curious to me. But in a way it makes sense, it's where I feel comfortable and more at home even if I don't like aspects of it.

I cut my teeth corresponding with people through what is referred to as the postal system (look it up, it still exists). After I picked up my first *MRR* and ordered my first bunch of zines reviewed and advertised in it, I was off and writing and networking with people all over the globe. The DIY thing was something I intuitively connected to, and before long I was writing zines, putting out tape comps, writing to people from all over the world, etc. That network, at least in its being centered on the mail, is gone largely. That or it acts as an auxiliary or supplemental method to e-mail. That communication is wholly electronic now, which is not something I fundamentally have a problem with as it is more efficient. Something about

though I miss, perhaps in an archaically nostalgic way, the personal touch, the unexpected stuff you may get like tapes, records, etc. There is an intimacy of written letters and a connection that cannot be conveyed digitally. I think people growing up now don't really appreciate that part of it, and probably can't understand how the underground punk/HC scene could have existed without the internet. I am still trying to figure out how to philosophically incorporate the internet into the international scene. I guess the best way to look at it is as another tool and way to network with each other. One thing I have to say is great about it is how close it makes us to scenes from all over the place. I never would have imagined getting as much info on worldwide punk as I can get now. That's one thing we had to work tooth and nail to get information about when the underground penpal and zinester network was the main conduit for information. I think it's pretty important to consider how this new medium (OK maybe it's not THAT new) is changing the way we do things and how it changes us.

Overall I would rate the internet as a great democratizing force for communication in our network. Bands from all over the world, from scenes we know very little about, now are there for us to communicate with and hear from. I always worry about the "digital divide" and whether everybody really has access to the internet, but from what a bunch of "third world" people tell me, even if they don't own a computer they do have access to them and can put their music up on it and even create websites. But here's the problem, people seem to pay way more attention to shit US bands that have been around two weeks and have a Myspace site and a couple of "brootal" D-beat "songs" that sound like they were recorded in a cardboard box than they do bands from say Thailand or Nepal who have been around for five years working hard at it and have spent their hard earned money on their recordings. The aforementioned US/Western band should save some fucking dignity and wait till they get their shit together in my opinion. I can't even begin to imagine my own embarrassment if I had put up all the short lived bands crappy recordings I had been in up there. I'd still be trying to live that one down.

The point is, when you get down to it, now that there is no excusing the access factor anymore (it's all out there for us to hear), nor the "sound quality" excuse as is sometimes used for worldwide bands, what is left is just first world centrism. Sure, Finnish, Swedish, US, and Japanese HC rules, there is no doubt there! But, there is a worldwide scene that is so interesting, varied, and in my opinion much more volatile and potent (no Hot Topic stores in Indonesia or Turkey, folks) but for some reason only a small portion of "first world" punks show any interest in, to say nothing of support for these bands.

By the way, I hate using the first/third world terminology but it's a construct that now seems to have some real world implications. In my zine *Mangelslakt*, we use the terms first or Western and third world only to clearly draw out factors we are trying to address. We also used the term World Wide Hardcore (WWHC) to describe our approach to the international punk scene. This is because the term "International HC/Punk" is used by some folks but ironically is used when a zine or label carries stuff from the US, Canada, Sweden, Finland, and maybe Japan. That's maybe technically international but also first world. Those bands generally don't need much assistance or support; they have plenty of vectors to be heard (labels, shows, zines, fans) and people to help them out. Not to mention the obligatory buzz that comes with any band coming out from those countries. If you're a band from Ecuador, Vietnam, China, Iran, Egypt, Brunei, or Cuba, what then? The idea is not to have a patronizing attitude that "oh, we must help these unfortunate people," but be what we really are, a worldwide scene of punks! We have to give respect to people who are working hard at doing the same thing we are, wherever they are! Its not that these scenes don't have their own mechanisms going, but I think it's only fair in the spirit of an international scene to give them support. Borders may divide us and political and cultural forces may attempt to separate us, but to me those are just the kind of limits punk rock is meant to smash.

Also fascinating in terms of change is how much the scene has grown since the early '90s. Some people consider this period a time of lull, which may be technically right. It didn't seem that way to me at the time, it was very exciting. It was mainly more intimate and perhaps per capita more active. Now things seem much bigger, almost astonishingly so when I think about it. I am sure this is in no small part due to accessibility and the late '90s indie/alternative explosions and your Green Days and NOFXs. But I also think now, which is most interesting to me, is the influence of social conditions. The voracious hatred of Bush, the US Empire, and the corruption and ignorance of the Neocon leadership and the failure of any liberal or progressive movements to do much of anything innovative I think has bred a situation analogous to the Reagan years (this applies both to the US scene and elsewhere). Rebellion (whether ultimately largely empty or symbolic we certainly could debate) makes more sense on a broader scale and punk rock, activism, and, perhaps unfortunately, nihilism seems to appeal more.

There are a couple reasons why I mention this: one, why should our movement really be so linked on which party or president is in power? And are we any different than just liberals or reformers with a snotty bent as a whole? I don't have the complete answers to these questions but it is worth some self-examination I think. I understand there are social forces at work that affect our scene in ways we cannot necessarily control, of course there is no punk rock membership card (I am working on that though). Most people burn out or drop out after a couple years. But for those few who stick around, it's important to examine how we think of ourselves, how we act, react, and deal with change in the greater society we live in. To not do this we risk becoming more insular and less in touch with some of the theoretically radical ideals we claim to value. I could also be optimistic and say if people wake up to realize the fucked-upness and injustice in the world, then that's great, whether punk rockers/activists or not. I just hope they are really realizing that by the message we send out, and not just a knee-jerk reaction alternative to mainstream society with an emphasis on fashion, record collecting, drinking, drugs, elective joblessness and homelessness, etc.

I want to make a final point this issue of celebrating the 25th anniversary of one of the most innovative and influential bands in extreme music. I have seen Napalm Death twice this year, once before several hundred people and once before maybe 60 people. Both shows were totally raging. They played just as hard at both and seemed to have more fun at the smaller show, which is pretty cool for a band of their notoriety. They have always been a favorite of mine and they have really come into their rightful place especially lately with their sound now being an amalgam of grind, metal, death, crust, and thrash—three of those being genres they had a hand in creating. I have liked all periods of ND, but I think they really deserve credit for all they have done and even becoming increasingly political over the years!! Here's to 25 more years of NAPALM!!!!

I also have to say I am fucking thrilled to be writing for *MRR*, as I mentioned above its played a fairly instrumental role in my illustrious punk rock existence. I also believe that under the tutelage of Golnar, Paul, and Chris, it's been the greatest it's been in years, and especially inclusive of WWHC™ (mail rights checks to me c/o *MRR*).

Ideally this column will contain my ramblings on issues in the punk community, projects, music, issues worldwide, also politics, history, racism, and so forth. I had hoped to include more music reviews and info on bands, tapes, records, activities, etc.

but unfortunately I couldn't get my shit together in time for this issue. Feel free to contact me (especially folks from underappreciated scenes all over) c/o *MRR*.

RALL DEAL

Chances are that you heard more about Rosie O'Donnell's flame war with Donald Trump than the passing of Sapamurat "Turkmenbashi" Niyazov. As seems to occur with increasing frequency, America's media ignored the most important story of the year.

A handful of news outlets that bothered to cover the 66-year-old dictator's death wallowed in the humor inherent in the extravagant personality cult he built up after Turkmenistan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Cannier obituary writers noted that the Central Asian nation "contains many of the world's largest natural gas fields, and provides gas to Russian and European countries." (Actually, the largest. Period.) But they missed the main point of the story, one with dramatic short-term consequences for Central Asia and breathtaking dangers to the United States during the first half of the new century.

The Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and—until now—Turkmenistan are all being ruled by the same former Communist Party bosses who ran them in Soviet times. Niyazov's death marks the beginning of the end for the post-Soviet authoritarian order and the beginning of a period of increasing instability, as foreign powers attempt to monopolize access to oil and natural gas resources and pipeline routes. Kazakhstan alone may possess more untapped oil reserves than Saudi Arabia and Iraq combined, and the politics and economies of the Central Asian republics are closely intertwined. What is at stake is nothing less than the security and control of the world economy.

Unless you were one of the five million desperately poor Turkmen forced to watch while your desert nation's gas wealth was systemically looted and squandered on such vanity projects as the gilt statue of Turkmenbashi that dominates the skyline of Ashkhabat and turns to face the sun (local wags say the sun turns to face it), it was easy to laugh at the ubiquitous trappings of unhinged egotism. Turkmenbashi's moon-eyed mug glared from banners hung from the façade of every government ministry and school, appeared on every denomination of currency, even on his own brands of vodka and cologne. Everything was named after him: the country's second-largest city, its airports, a large meteorite, the month of January. His not-so-little green book of aphorisms ("Time is a mace. Hit or be hit!"), the *Rukhnama*, became required reading for schoolchildren and motorists who sought to renew their driver's licenses.

Saddam Hussein's reputation for self-indulgence had nothing on Turkmenbashi. Niyazov's megalomania ranged from the grandiose—at the time of his death he had just completed the world's largest mosque (featuring quotes from the *Rukhnama*, naturally) and had ordered the construction of a man-made lake in the middle of the Karakum desert—to obsessive micromanagement. Each Turkmen student's college application was personally considered by the great man.

Even his commonsense dictates came with a bizarre twist. During the 1990s Turkmenbashi ordered that natural gas, as a national patrimony, be supplied to Turkmen homes for free. Since most people were too poor to afford matches, however, it became common practice to leave their stoves on 24-7. Where foreigners saw hilarity, Turkmen seethed with resentment; Ashkhabati motorists saved their household garbage so they could chuck it on the lawn of one of Niyazov's pink pleasure palaces.

A power struggle is underway. Within hours of Turkmenbashi's fatal heart attack, his Constitutionally mandated successor, Majlis (lower house of parliament) chairman Ovezgeldy Atayev, found himself behind bars, arrested for an unspecified "criminal investigation." An obscure deputy prime minister and former dentist, Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, declared himself acting president and has arranged to have the Constitution retrofitted to validate his rule.

"Many Western analysts," reported *The New York Times*, "said the country was unlikely to change and that authoritarian rule would continue under any of Mr. Niyazov's successors." But Turkmen exiles who lead opposition parties are itching to fill the vacuum—if not of power, of charisma—left by Niyazov's demise. Leaders of the nation's five biggest tribes are jockeying for advantage. And five million Turkmen who can't afford matches want a piece of the action—and want to get even with the government thugs who shut down the country's hospitals and medical clinics.

Berdymukhammedov's regime may keep the lid on the pressure cooker of Turkmen politics for a short time, but it isn't hard to imagine a country of former (and present) nomads disintegrating into the chaos of warlordism as a result of the venting of long-suppressed ethnic and political rivalries. A Turkmen civil war would quickly turn regional. Iran and Afghanistan, which share Turkmenistan's southern border, would side with any faction that could guarantee continued trade, but any instability would affect the refining of crude from Kazakhstan, a major world supplier. It would probably end construction of the post-9/11 Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline being built to carry Kazakh oil and Turkmen gas between Turkmenistan and a Pakistani port on the Indian Ocean.

Everyone is betting that Turkmenbashi's foreign policy of "positive neutrality" won't last long. Russia has already indicated its intent to reassert itself in Turkmenistan. Here's where we come in: No American president, Democrat or Republican, will allow Russia to gain control over the world's largest energy reserves without a fight. Moreover, neither Russia nor the US will watch idly as Central Asia implodes and takes the world economy along for the ride. US troops, currently based in Uzbekistan, could be sent in to restore order and keep the Russians out.

Signaling renewed high-level interest in Turkmenistan, US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov both attended Turkmenbashi's funeral on Christmas Eve.

Uzbekistan's universally reviled despot Islam Karimov, who got away with the 2005 massacre of at least 700 civilians at Andijon because of his country's energy reserves, will almost certainly be an early casualty of civil strife in Central Asia. A witch's brew of Stalin-era ethnic gerrymandering and brutal suppression of a nascent Islamist insurgency, mixed with the collapse of Karimov's Uzbek police state, could easily take Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—poor countries barely recovering from civil conflict and dependant on the urban-based Uzbek economy—with them. Even Kazakhstan, the most stable of a fragile lot, is susceptible to an uprising; few Kazakhs have shared in the nation's oil boom.

Whether or not Turkmenbashi's death directly affects its neighbors, it's a reminder that Central Asia's autocrats aren't getting younger. Laugh about the Leader of All Turkmen's excesses now. The storm is coming.

New book! *Silk Road To Ruin: Is Central Asia The New Middle East?* (NBM Publishing, 304 pp., price $22.95), is out now. You can get the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the Internet, or order a signed copy by mailing $30 to the above address (include your mailing address and how you'd like it signed).

Silk Road To Ruin is a comprehensive primer to the political powder keg of Central

Asia—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Xinjiang in Western China—that will soon make the current war in Iraq look like Dick Cheney's proverbial "cakewalk." It includes 100 pages of graphic novella accounts of my trips to the Stans, photos and maps of the region, and in-depth essays explaining everything from oil pipeline politics to buzkashi, the craziest and most dangerous sport currently played by the human race.

"You had *what?*" my current girlfriend asks me as she stares at my shaved pubic area.

Just like Britney Spears. And Paris Hilton.

"Ummm, well," I stammer.

"Let me guess," she says.

But before she can, I tell her *the* story. One that took place some years earlier. In an age when I think there were still cavemen and dinosaurs.

Or at least, no emo.

*

"Get your hand out of your pants," My Future Ex-Wife yells at me for like the umpteenth time that day. I remove it, grab the clicker, and change the channel. I've already seen that episode of *Law & Order* about a zillion times, and am interested in testing my brain power with *Jeopardy*. As Alex Trebek starts the first round of questions, I start to slowly move my hand down the inside front of my sweatpants. To my crotch.

"George!" My Future Ex-Wife suddenly yells, "don't ignore me!"

I remove my hand again, and try to explain to her that I have jock itch, as usual, and it's, well, itchy.

"Then scratch over your pants," she says, as she glares at me.

I tell her I don't want to "scratch over my pants" because then it will make me look like some homeboy on the street who is always adjusting his wangdoodle for optimum viewing by chicks.

"Well, it's better then having your hand down your pants!" she exclaims.

"No, it's not," I tell her. I explain that real men, like Al Bundy on *Married With Children*, like to watch television with their hands down their pants. That it's normal. And what isn't normal is her *reaction*.

"I bet my friend Laurel's husband doesn't put his hands down his pants when he's watching television," My Future Ex-Wife shoots back at me.

"Yeah," I say, "he puts them down other people's pants!"

"That's not funny," My Future Ex-Wife snaps at me.

"And neither is this fucking jock itch," I tell her. And it wasn't. I was so damn itchy it was driving me nuts. I figured it was from just working out and sweating too much. When I had asked my doctor what to do for jock itch, he told me to, well, powder my balls. So that's what I did. With talcum powder. And if it was really bad, I'd use that Cruex stuff.

But for some reason, none of that was working.

So I scratched.

And scratched.

And scratched some more.

"What if we have children, and they see you with your hand down your pants?" My Future Ex-Wife asks me.

"I'll tell them I have jock itch," I tell her.

"No you won't, because you won't put your hand down your pants in front of our children," she tells me.

I look at her. Her face is visibly upset. Her eyes are on the brink of shedding tears.

"OK, OK," I give in, and say, "I won't do it in front of our kids!"

My Future Ex-Wife sighs with relief as I start to scratch again.

As I do, I feel little bumps around the ends of my pubic hair. The end nearest the skin.

"I think I have pimples on my crotch," I tell My Future Ex-Wife.

"Let's see," she says, and I show her.

There are indeed pimples, but unlike the ones on my face, these are black.

"Looks like blackheads," My Future Ex-Wife says, examining me like my urologist.

"They itch like hell," I say, "I wonder if I could just pop them like zits!"

"Let's go into the bathroom where there's more light," My Future Ex-Wife says, and drags me in by my Oscar Meyer.

Once we are under the bright lights, My Future Ex-Wife examines the "pimples" more closely.

"Hmmm," she says as she looks at all of them, near the ends of my now-graying pubic hair.

"Hmmm, what?" I say to her.

"They don't look like pimples," she says.

"They are itchy," I tell her, "I'm gonna pop one!"

"NO!" My Future Ex-Wife exclaims, "You are not!"

"Why?" I ask.

"Because they don't look like pimples!"

And with that, she takes out a pair of tweezers and pinches one of the "blackheads."

It comes off real easy and she then puts it on the sink counter to examine.

"Hmmm," she says, as she looks at it.

"Hmmm, what?" I ask her again.

She is about to answer me when suddenly the pimple gets up on a bunch of teeny-tiny legs and crawls away.

Instead of answering me, she just screams.

*

I guess it all started about two months earlier. When we were vacationing in Cancun. Mexico.

We had been there a few times before, and really liked it. The water was crystal clear, the sand white, and the food great. If it didn't make you sick. And best of all, it was cheap! I mean, like almost free by New York standards.

Anyway, we got this vacation deal where they'd fly us in and give us a choice of any hotel we wanted, as long as it was on their "program."

We had stayed at El Presidente before, and wanted to stay there again, but we'd heard that it had gone downhill with the new owners. Plus, their beach had washed away with the last hurricane. We considered the Calinda, but it was too much of a party hotel. And we were there as a couple.

So we chose the Sheraton. We'd seen it from the main strip many times, and it looked swell. It had a great view of both the coral reef *and* the lagoon.

The lagoon in Cancun is awesome. They have restaurants where you can sit next to the water and feed tortillas to the fish. If you get enough fish eating that Mexican bread, you can sometimes attract an alligator. And then the fun starts.

Anyway, so we got to the hotel and checked in. We went up to the tenth floor, where our room was, and entered the highly air-conditioned room. The cool air against our hot skin felt so good, the first thing we decided to do was *not* to go swimming, but to take a nap. As My Future Ex-Wife turned down the sheets, we saw something that I should have thought about more.

A bug.

A teeny-tiny bug.

It crawled around pretty quickly, and on closer examination, it looked like a piece of sand with legs.

And claws.

"A sand lobster," I thought to myself, as I told My Future Ex-Wife not to worry, that it was nothing.

And that's the last I thought of it.

Then we climbed into bed and took a nap.

I wonder if there is even such thing as a "sand lobster."

A few days later, after swimming around in the beautiful Cancun Ocean, I developed a rash on my chest that itched like hell. And also hurt. Because, well, I was as sunburned

as any white man from New York could ever be.

"My chest is itchy," I told My Future Ex-Wife late one afternoon, as we changed into our clothes from our bathing suits, and prepared to visit the Flamingo Mall, our favorite hang-out spot.

"Let's see," she said, and looked at the rash of hives I'd developed all over my upper torso.

"What do you think?" I asked her.

"You need to go to a doctor," My Future Ex-Wife sternly told me.

"We ain't wasting no money on some damn Mexican doctor," I told her. "We came to Mexico because it was cheap! I'm not spending the money!"

"OK, Nick," My Future Ex-Wife said to me. She'd called me my stepdad's name because he was probably the only human being on Earth cheaper than myself. Except for the money he gives us.

"We'll go to the pharmacy at the mall," I told My Future Ex-Wife. "They'll know what to do!"

"Like give you more Valium or Codeine like on our last trip?" My Future Ex-Wife said.

I just smiled.

After a really bad Big Mac in the Flamingo food court, we made our way to my favorite local drug dealers and tried to explain what was going on.

"My chest is itchy," I told the little local fellow behind the counter.

"Shest?" he asked.

"Chest," I said.

"Oh, what is shest?" he asked me.

Instead of explaining it to him, I lifted up the front of my white Ramones shirt and showed him the hives.

"No good," he said.

"I know," I told him, "it is no good. It itches and hurts!"

"Ra-moan-aays" he said back to me.

"Excuse me?"

"Ra-moan-aays," he said again, as he pointed to my chest.

"No," I said, "my chest hurts. It itches. Help!"

"Ra-moan-aays" he said again.

Just as I was about to yell at the moustached little man, My Future Ex-Wife said, "I think he's talking about your t-shirt!"

"Ramones!" I said!

"Yes," he said, "Ra-moan-aays."

"Punk Rock!" I exclaimed.

The guy smiled and I smiled back.

I began to like him.

We, I mean me, talked a bit about how great the four super-dudes from Queens are, and finally we moved onto the topic of my chest.

"The o-cin deed thees to you," the little guy said.

I nodded as he handed me a tube of cream.

"Thees ees for shest," the guy told me.

"Yeah, Yeah," I told him, then thanked him and paid him for it.

As we left the store, My Future Ex-Wife explained to me that it was an anti-bacterial cream of some sort.

I put it on back at the hotel, and finally the hives and itching went away.

The sunburn did as well. Two weeks later.

*

Back in New York, my balls start to itch. As usual. At first I think it's jock itch, but it won't go away no matter *what* kind of powder I use.

So I try the anti-bacterial cream that had worked so well in Mexico.

And it does stop the skin from itching.

Because it takes it all off.

I end up with third-degree burns all over my testicles, and my doctor, when seeing what looks like raw hamburger meat, tells me I am lucky to still have everything intact. Then he tells me some really bad news.

That I have to wear shorts for a month.

But that's another story.

Anyway, after that whole disaster is over, I start itching again, and that's how I end up in the bathroom with My Future Ex-Wife.

And the crawling blackhead.

"It's moving," My Future Ex-Wife screams, as my pimple sprouts legs and crawls right past the sink, making its way toward the toilet.

I, usually the squeamish one, crush the little bastard with my thumb.

"What the hell is that?" My Future Ex-Wife asks, totally freaked out.

"I have no clue," I tell her.

And I don't.

"Let's call Nick!" we both say at the same time.

I dial Nick's number and explain to him the situation.

He starts laughing.

"What's so fucking funny?" I ask him, as I started to scratch myself harder and harder.

"You have crabs!" he tells me.

"Impossible."

"I got them back in college," he explains, then goes on to tell me this whole story about some girl.

"I don't care about any girl right now," I scream at Nick, "and I don't wanna hear anything except how to get rid of these things!"

Nick explains to me that I have to go to the drug store and get some cream. He even knows the name of it.

"Same stuff I had to use way back when," he tells me.

"Great," I mumble.

After a quick goodbye, I hang up the phone, run to the drugstore, which is, thank God, still open, and get the stuff. As I apply it to my crotch and surrounding area, I read about how the crabs will come back in about a week because they'll lay eggs on the pubic hair, and the cream can't kill those.

The very thought of bug eggs on my body freaks me out so much I grab My Future Ex-Wife's Lady Bic, and, well, that's about the end of that. But for the next month, every time I go to take a leak, I feel like I am molesting a twelve-year-old. With a really big dick.

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. Speaking about body bugs, Evan, the bass player of Furious George, just got scabies from a couch at Columbia University, where he is studying to be a Rabbi. Damn dirty Ivy League fucks.
2. I hear Michael of Furious George just got a side gig with The Blackout Shoppers! Yay!!!!
3. Marc of Furious George (also of Letch Patrol and Iron Prostate fame) is on the prowl and looking for new hot chicks. Send resumes in care of me.
4. Is it 2007 already? That means I've been writing for *Maximumrocknroll* for over 21 years. Wait! Forget I said that!!!!
5. Punk Rock!!! And Beer!!!!!

This month's column was written by Ara Babajian, dad to two-and-a-half year old Julia. I met Ara while on the Citizen Fish/Leftover Crack tour a few months back. He's Leftover Crack's drummer and tours playing drums with other bands as well. Since I had then eight-month old baby Maya-Rae on tour with me, he and I had an easy time talking about being parents and how it works with playing music on the road. In last month's column I wrote about some of what it was like touring with baby in tow. So for this month, I thought it'd be cool to hear the opposite—what it's like to leave a child at home while on tour.

Punkparents, keep getting in touch!

yardwideyarns@hotmail.com or 4747 30th Ave. NE #A102 / Seattle, WA 98105

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Being a father is an unbelievably beautiful, isolating, expansive sort of experience. I thought I never wanted to be a father. I figured it would just get in the way of everything I wanted to do in life. I still hadn't done much touring by the time I was thirty, and so the idea of having a kid at that age made me feel like I was settling down too

soon. I was afraid I'd be an unsatisfied, bitter old man who never got to do all the things I wanted simply because I ran out of time.

But it's been quite the opposite. Since my daughter Julia was born I've been more creative, better traveled, nicer, more relaxed, more ambitious, more at peace, and more able to feel love. Becoming a parent was a relief to me. Like turning 30. It happened. It's done. Now I can move on to the next thing, whatever that may be.

So many people I know cop-out on the idea of having kids by saying things like they don't want to bring a child into such a cruel world, they want to wait until they have lots of money or are in a better state, mentally. I'm tired of hearing it. The most political thing you can do at this point in time is get married and have a child. Start your own tribe. Add to the army of good people in the world. Fight the evil; fight the mediocrity by raising up a beautiful little soul. Zero population growth is a cool-sounding slogan. It's a good song. But it never rang true with me. "I love you, Daddy," sounds a whole lot better.

My only real problem with fatherhood is just how little is physically required of me. My wife Lorien has breast-fed our daughter since birth. So I never got to connect with Julia by feeding her with a bottle. The breast met all of her initial needs. She would go to sleep by nursing, wake up scared in the night only to be nursed back to sleep, wake up scared in the morning only to be nursed into consciousness. She'd nurse when hungry, sad, happy, confused—you name it. She was so breast-centric that as she got older sometimes she'd squeeze my chest and say, "Where's Daddy's milk?" It's a good question, one that's not easy to explain to a two-year-old.

So, during her first year I felt completely unnecessary and isolated. I felt like I'd done my job, been given the gold watch for my years of service and was now marching off into some sort of early retirement. Because really, there was nothing for me to do except watch the relationship between mother and daughter develop. My job was really to just keep an eye on Julia whenever Lorien left the room; to find new ways to make her laugh, to make her like me. Laughter seemed to be my only way of connecting with my daughter. So I'd make all sorts of funny faces, noises, do all sorts of stupid dances and crazy movements just to get her to acknowledge me.

I was a little miffed by my wife's decisions to never let Julia cry without immediately rushing to her aid, to let her nurse whenever she wanted to, because it took so much of her time away from me. Her reasoning was that if Julia's needs were always met then she would grow up to be a secure and confident child rather than an anxious, scared maniac. I couldn't argue with that. Time would tell. All I knew was that it made me feel edged out of the picture. It made going on tour a lot easier.

I've been on the road for about five months a-year since Julia was born. I play drums for The Slackers and Leftover Crack. I enjoy the irony of playing in a band like Leftover Crack while having an extremely stable home life. It's that stability that gives me the courage to be a monster. Being on a tour is a hell of a lot easier when you have a daughter and wife waiting for you back home. It's a very grounding sort of reminder that tour life is not real life, that it's all just show biz except for the occasional moments of pure artistry and connectedness. And like I said, touring is a lot easier when you're not really needed on the home front.

This is how it was for the first year of Julia's life. I had an almost perfect balance of road life and home life. The tours were always just long enough to be called work, sometimes even short enough to be construed as vacations. Three weeks is now the maximum amount of time that all the mid-thirty-year olds I know can stand to be in a van with each other. Any more than that and you're asking for daggers.

I was a father, a husband, and a working musician. But the father bit still seemed very superficial, very remote, because I wasn't really doing anything other than existing. And I wasn't very good at that because I was only present seven months out of the year. Without any daily, working connection to my daughter would she just forget who I was the next time I walked through the door? This was a constant worry. So, I vowed to be home more in her second year, to turn down job offers that I really couldn't afford to reject, if only to ensure that Julia would at least know me by sight.

It was in her second year that she and I became friends. She stopped breast-feeding so much and started eating solid foods. So I was able to sit with her and feed her and make a fun little ritual out of all her meals. She was able to stand and walk which meant that she could dance with me now. And so we'd put on They Might Be Giants or Motörhead or Duran Duran and dance in the most unselfconscious, beautifully contorted ways. She was able to trust me, to be alone with me without getting scared. We were able to walk down the street together without me being mortally afraid that she would start screaming and crying for her mother and immediately want me to take her home. This all meant so much to me. More than I can put into words. The feeling of isolation was still there but not nearly as palpable as it once was. At least now I could be a part of her world and try to make her a part of mine. She'd take a pair of drumsticks and practice along with me in the kitchen. She'd do stretches and exercise with me every morning in front of the TV. She'd walk with me to get coffee and we'd stop in front of her favorite wall so that she could dance for a few minutes, uninterrupted.

These were some good times. She didn't understand what I did for a living yet. I was just there sometimes and then I wasn't. And this was a good thing. Because once she started understanding my going away, that's when things really became heartbreaking for all of us.

It was at the beginning of Julia's third year that my bands started doing really well (by musicians' standards) and I started having to go away for longer stretches of time. We were all making music we liked and getting paid to keep doing it, which, after 25 years of playing for nothing was a huge deal for me. I got to do some great tours that year and I met people who changed my life for the better, but again, try explaining that to a child. All Julia could see was that I was not there. I was working hard and saving money so that we could buy a house and get out of the city, move to the wilds where Julia could live with trees and run around and sleep through the night without car alarms and police sirens cutting through her little brain. There was a noble purpose to it all, but this could never be explained to my little girl because I didn't know the language.

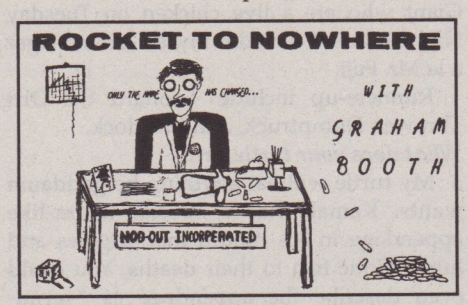
I'd try to talk to her on the phone but a lot of times she just wouldn't speak to me. I'd come home from tour and she'd swat at me, say, "I don't like Daddy!" and cry when I'd try to console her. Leaving became a real drag. It got to the point where I didn't want to be on the road anymore but I no longer had a choice. I'd committed to it and to back out now would fuck up everything. I felt like I was betraying a child's trust whenever I pulled out my suitcase and started packing. So, I'd try to alleviate the guilt by including Julia in my preparations, which seemed to make her feel a little better. Still, it's a very impossible thing, the idea that your child doesn't like you despite the fact that you're always trying to do the right thing for her. I know it's not a real dislike but it feels like it at the time. Because I am usually between trips and needing all the love I can get. When my daughter screams at me, I scream at my wife, my wife screams back and it's all just a desperate fight for time, time that is constantly eluding us and flying quickly out the door.

I had nine tours that year. 200 shows with three different bands. That's a lot for me. By the end of the year I had bought a house via email while I was staying at a squat in Berlin. We moved into it two months later while I was between tours. I was there for two days

then had to leave for another five weeks. By this point Julia didn't know what hit her. I didn't know whether I was coming or going and Lorien was now teaching herself how not to love me while I was away in order to keep herself from getting too down. This is a trick I had learned on tour, not looking at pictures of my family until the very end of a tour for fear of getting too despondent at their absence. But to hear from my wife that she was now actively practicing this approach in order to just get from one day to the next was truly heartbreaking news. I just wanted the year to be over. I just wanted to get to know my family again. I just wanted to be sure of my daughter's love.

Once Christmas rolled around and the year had finally ended I took stock of the isolation. It was still very much a part of my life as a father, husband and man. I was home now but home had shifted far enough from its origins to make the rituals of the road feel more familiar to me than my own family. I was with my wife and daughter again but my wife and I had a lot of reconnecting to do and I needed to regain my daughter's trust by simply waking up with her every morning, giving her a hug and kiss and telling her how much I loved her. It all sounds so simple but it's all so weird and impossible sometimes. I'll be walking down the street with Julia, an airplane will zoom overhead, whereupon she'll look up and point and say, "Daddy's plane!" This is funny and sweet and beautifully innocuous in its way but for some reason it bums me out. Maybe it's that my daughter associates me with something that's distant, untouchable, constantly moving away from her rather than towards her. Maybe it's that she thinks I'm an airline pilot rather than a musician, which is somehow worrisome to me. I don't know. The impossible thing about fatherhood, about trying to stay a part of a wonderful little family while I'm on tour or just back from one is that I feel like I am constantly starting over again, that I'm only as good as my last kind gesture, my last warm embrace, my last meaningful look, the gravity or lightness of my being. It doesn't matter what Julia and I did together yesterday. Rather, are we sitting in the same room now? Are we speaking the same language? Do we indeed connect? Does she still love me as much as I love her? Touring teaches you the importance of living in moments. When I return to my life as a father it is as though my moments with Julia are in a constant state of creation. There's no rejuvenation, no reconstruction, no reintegration; it's all new, all urgent, and all vital, until it becomes old again. It's exhausting, to be sure, but it is a sweet exhaustion, sweet and secure in the knowledge of itself.

And that is ultimately what keeps me from indulging in my isolation: the simple fact that my daughter wants to be with me. If only to watch Elmo or to chalk up the sidewalk in front of our house. If only to chase the cat into hiding, if only to chase each other in circles until we fall down dizzy and elated from the mindless joy of our most actively happy moments together. Whatever she wants to do, I'll be present. I'll be there.



About two weeks ago, a good friend of mine from Texas, on tour with his friends' band, called me up out of the blue. He was going to be in Anaheim the next day, and he asked me to drive down so we could hang out together in the OC. I've been living in Los Angeles for 18 months now, but until then I never had an excuse to make the trek down. I made a few phone calls, arranging for another friend to drive up from San Diego. Now, not only would I get to catch up with old friends, but I'd also finally have an excuse (and some friends) to hit the record stores of Orange County.

Last time I went record shopping in the OC was about three years ago. I was living in San Diego for the summer. Ahhh, those were the days...I wasn't working, just along for my wife's ride as a camp counselor. I passed the time by selling records, helping (ever so slightly) with the bills and paying for my still growing record habit.

I tell ya, something about Southern California really brings out the record hoarder in people. Maybe it's the concentration of the music industry...the acres and acres of record stores...the never-ending supply of obscure and undiscovered bands? I don't know, but most of the real record hounds out there surely learned it while doing time in California. There is a level of fanaticism there that you can't nearly approach in most other American cities. I know obsessive record collectors all over the world, but Californians take it to a whole 'nother level: socially awkward, severely reclusive, no "friends" outside of record collectors (are they even friends?), junk car, live with parents, max out credit cards for records, cash out 401K plan to buy records, sell car to buy records...

Like, in Southern California, you could literally spend every second of every day out there looking for records...record stores, thrift stores, garage sales, private sales, flea markets, antique shops, record shows...you wouldn't even scratch the surface of what's out there. In most cities, given two-three days, you can hit every record store, all the good thrift stores, and most everything else isn't even worth your time. After those two days, you don't need to go back out for several weeks, if not months. In LA, if you skip a week, there is no question of whether you will lose out on something: you will! And most likely you will hear about it weeks later...I hate to say it's rubbing off.

Anyways, San Diego. Back then, it was worth going to record stores more than once a month. Off The Record was still at their Hillcrest location, and still had a steady stream of used stuff coming in every week. Record City was around the corner, usually worth a stop. Cow (as in the farm animal) in Ocean Beach had some decent records. Then there was Lou's Records in Encinitas!

The legend at Lou's was that several 45s on the (Radioactive) imprint by San Diego punk luminaries such as INJECTIONS, EXECUTIVES, and XTERMINATORS were still lingering there as late as the mid-'90s, still at 1982's prices. Sadly, I missed that boat by a few years, but they still had a ton of stuff, and I went several times that summer...often several times a week. Unfortunately, they had stopped buying used records by then, and when I visited a few months ago, it appeared to be all of the same records I saw three years ago. Sad. About the furthest North I used to get on a regular basis was Carlsbad, and Spin Records, which is apparently still there (yay!).

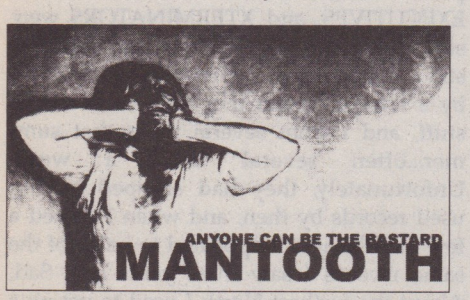
Of course, the record stores of Orange County were legendary, so I made it a point to make a few trips, often with tour guides. The stores were spread out all over the place, so even with a whole day, it was impossible to hit everything. Everybody already knows about Vinyl Solution in Huntington Beach (I hope!), but there was also Underdog Records, Noise Noise Noise, Z Records, Goat Hill Records, and on and on. I'm frothing at the thought now, just like I was frothing two weeks ago when I was making plans for a day of record shopping with friends.

Given my present unfamiliarity with the territory, I called up the Punk Rock Dentist for a consultation. If you OC-ers thought your only local competition for records was other young punks, you would be quite wrong. The Punk Rock Dentist is a perfect example...he grew up seeing ADOLESCENTS and SHATTERED FAITH the first time around in the early '80s, but he never stopped buying records. He still makes the rounds once a week, and I knew he would be able to tell me exactly where to go. The dentist had some bad news for me...

Of the five Orange County record stores I listed above only one—*one*!!!—of them still

exists! Vinyl Solution. I knew a lot of stores have been going out of business, but this is getting ridiculous! Underdog Records was one of the best punk stores I've ever set foot in, I still remember buying my slightly used copy of POISON IDEA's *Pick Your King* EP on clear vinyl there for all of $40 that summer.

I broke the bad news to the boys. We spent the afternoon at Vinyl Solution and a relatively new Anaheim upstart, Radiation Records, with an exceptionally leisurely dinner in between. Thankfully for all, VINYL SOLUTION was still worth the trip. My "scores" for the day were a Gut Insinct (sic) *Disturbing The Peace* 7" for $1.00, and an ultra rare California private metal LP by THE MEZMERIST called *The Innocent, The Forsaken, The Guilty* for $4.99. Had this been the Orange County of 2003, that would have been the start to a very long day, and a very tall stack of vinyl to show for it. It's a sad day for record collectors everywhere...



If anything else, I am a brazen asshole bent on being the most contrary motherfucker in the land. Case in point: I have decided to eschew one of punkdom's main tenets, imposed upon me with outrageous fascism—one that tells me that I must own at least one of the three "punk" pets: a dog, a cat, or a rat. I have chosen as my punk pet of choice the most brutal animal in existence—an animal so fucking insane that most scientists, biologists, and zoologists dare not speak it's common name aloud whilst traveling through the darkened corridors of their decrepit institutions, but only manage a faint whisper of *Macrochelys temmincki*. Even the *Bible* doesn't mention this almighty reptile. Therefore, the Alligator Snapping Turtle is at odds with both science *and* religion. I bet your little mangy pooch is barely at odds with either.

Right now, he's only about the size of a silver dollar, but one day he'll grow to be 200 lbs and possibly two feet in diameter. These things look like monsters or at least dinosaurs. That's right. I have in my possession a real fucking dinosaur.

Frequently Asked Questions About My Precious Turtle

What's your turtle's name?

His full name shall be Kamala P. Merriweather (Pizza Dreamboat AKA Fantasy Koopa Kid), but I will call him Kamala for short. He was named by Missyunderpants as she was watching *Law & Order*. Although she contends that it was in honor of Lookout recording stars "Kamala and the Carnivores," I believe he was named after WWF wrestler Kamala the Ugandan Giant who ate a live chicken on Tuesday Night Titans. I consider myself his manager a la Mr. Fuji.

Runners-up include: Leonard the Dirt Thrower, Dumptruck, and Murdock.

What does your turtle eat?

My turtle will eat anything he goddamn wants. Kamala has a special worm-like appendage in his mouth that wiggles and lures idiotic fish to their deaths. You could even describe the appendage as "vermiform," but I assure you it will never release any Witchy Poo records.

He sloppily devours minnows, leaving only the heads to float about the aquarium in a whimsical ballet of brutality.

What will you do when he gets to be 200 lbs?

I have several plans open to me. The first and most reasonable would be to build an ultra-cool terrarium that would sufficiently maintain a beast of such girth and power. If I found that he was too unwieldy, I suppose I could donate him to a wildlife reserve or even the local zoo, but I don't fancy myself as such a responsible member of humanity.

Thus, I've toyed with the idea of housing him in some kind of dank crypt that could only be accessed through a trap door right in front of my desk where I could most conveniently dispose of my enemies, incompetent henchmen, and/or bothersome family members. When I've heard enough excuses, I will release them to their deaths. They probably won't be devoured immediately, but left to suffer for a few days until they are entranced by the wriggling of Kamala's vermiform appendage and eaten alive.

There is also the possibility that I could become emotionally and mentally dependant on my pet and unable to leave his side without being reduced to a fit of tremors and weeping. If so, I will purchase one of those baby harnesses and carry him around like he's my infant monster son. I will take him to the park, try to pick up chicks, and watch him gorge on their children.

How long do Alligator Snapping Turtles live?

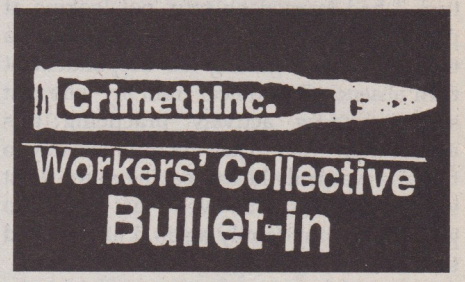
Most estimates range from 100 to 200 years. I have already had it outlined in my will that my fetid corpse is to be fed piece by piece to Kamala. My children and grandchildren will then care for/be food for him.

Where did you find this monstrosity?

I bought him at an exotic pet store outside of Pittsburgh where you can also buy a 20-foot Malaysian King Cobra. The owner of the store has a bunch of neck tattoos of scorpions and the *Aeon Flux* "fly caught in eyelashes."

ENDNOTES:

1) email: gregory.mantooth@gmail.com



Hey, friends! This month, our column will hearken back to the old days of CrimethInc. *MRR* columns, when we used to present the how-to recipes that later became the book *Recipes for Disaster*. The subject this time is Really Really Free Markets—what they are, how to throw your own, and what happened when our team of crash-test dummies used them as a tactic for the militant re-occupation of public space. If you want to be in touch about this subject or any other, contact us at Really Really CrimethInc., PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402, USA, or www.crimethinc.com.

Once a month, two hundred or more people from all walks of life gather at the commons in the center of our town. They bring everything from jewelry to firewood to give away, and take whatever they want. There are booths offering bicycle repair, hairstyling, even tarot readings. People leave with full-size bed frames and old computers; if they don't have a vehicle to transport them, a volunteer driver is available. No money changes hands, no one haggles over the comparative worth of items or services, nobody is ashamed about being in need. Contrary to government ordinances, no fee is paid for the use of this public space, nor is anyone "in charge." Sometimes a marching band appears; sometimes a puppetry troupe performs, or people line up to take a swing at a piñata. Games and conversations take place around the periphery, and everyone has a plate of warm food and a bag of free groceries. Banners hang from branches and rafters proclaiming "FOR THE COMMONS, NOT LANDLORDS OR BUREAUCRACY" and "NI JEFES, NI FRONTERAS" and a king-size blanket is spread with radical reading material, but these aren't essential to the event—this is a social institution, not a demonstration.

Thanks to our monthly 'Free Markets, everyone in our town has a working reference point for anarchist economics. Life is a little easier for those of us with low or no income, and relationships develop in a space

in which social class and financial means are at least temporarily irrelevant.

Why the 'Free Market Works

The 'Free Market model has several virtues to recommend it for anarchists hoping to build local infrastructures and momentum. First, like Critical Mass or Food Not Bombs, it lends itself to a decentralized approach: so long as the idea is well-distributed, neither hierarchy nor central coordination is necessary to organize a 'Free Market. This makes the 'Free Market model helpful for those hoping to cultivate personal responsibility and autonomous initiative in their communities; it also means that, should your 'Free Market run into trouble with the authorities, they won't be able to shut it down by simply targeting the leaders.

As a means of bringing people together, Food Not Bombs seems to have built-in limits: in much of North America, the stigma around eating free food is strong enough that often only dropouts, radicals, and desperately poor people are comfortable doing so in public. The 'Free Market model, conversely, can be comfortable for almost anyone. In a consumer society in which shopping is the common denominator of all social activity, everyone feels entitled to pick through items at a yard sale—and the fact that they're free just sweetens the deal. Middle class people, of course, need more than anything else to get rid of things: their houses are all so overfilled with unused commodities that the opportunity to do something with them is a godsend. This works out nicely for the rest of us! And thanks to wasteful mass-production, even the poorest of the poor usually have access to a surplus of some kind. Being able to give something to someone who needs it is even more fulfilling than getting things for free: centuries of capitalist conditioning have not succeeded in grinding out our instinctive propensity for mutual aid.

The bottom-feeding dropouts that comprise part of this magazine's readership are well-equipped to organize 'Free Markets. Dumpstering and scavenging frequently yield more than any one household can make use of; regular 'Free Markets give urban foragers the chance to put all that bounty at the disposal of other communities. Creative access to photocopying and spare time are both valuable for advertising 'Free Markets. Travelers can bring in fresh energy and take on temporary roles to decrease the pressure on locals who risk accruing too much attention for their efforts. Starting from the minimal resources available to the excluded, impoverished fringe groups can build up counter-structures that eventually provide tremendous abundance, visibility, and social leverage.

The 'Free Market is not just a means of getting stuff without paying. Long-term participation in 'Free Markets dispels the materialist programming that makes people covet useless items by denying access to them, and demonstrates just how possible and fulfilling the anarchist alternative is. It also presents a point of departure for further struggles: if this is what we can do with the scanty resources we're able to get our hands on now, what could we do with the entire wealth of this society?

Pitfalls

As with any tactic, the 'Free Market model can fail when applied incorrectly. The most common mistake is to organize a 'Market the way you would organize a demonstration: issue a press release heavy with rhetoric, put up fliers featuring circle-As or words like "social justice," tie the event to some ideology or coalition. This is senselessly limiting. The 'Free Market model works because its content is inherently radical; emphasizing form over content can only distract and alienate. You don't have to hide your personal commitments or affiliations—just make sure the center of gravity is that everyone is invited to come share things, pure and simple.

Another reason some 'Free Markets fail is that they come across as the territory of one particular demographic or subculture. If almost all the attendees come from a certain background, those who don't will feel like outsiders; there need to be enough people involved from various walks of life that anyone who happens by feels comfortable. When organizing a town's first 'Free Market, be careful to invite as broad a range of people as possible. Likewise, visitors can be a liability rather than an asset if their numbers approach those of local participants. The past two CrimethInc. convergences have both included 'Free Markets, each of which was the first such event to take place in the host town. Both were failures: an event that depends on local involvement to succeed cannot be initiated by outsiders.

Finally, don't expect to draw thousands if your 'Markets happen randomly every year or so. Consistency is one of the most important elements of a successful 'Free Market. A sporadic schedule inevitably means that attendance will be limited to those immediately connected to the networks through which promotion takes place; a regular event can eventually attract quite a lot of people, as word spreads outside the circles from which the idea originated. On the other hand, your 'Markets should not occur more frequently than you can replenish energy and resources. Each one should be a unique event, with enough effort invested in it to make it something unprecedented. That way people will always show up to see what happens, and will take them seriously enough to contribute energy themselves.

Throw Your Own 'Free Market!

It's easy to organize a Really Really Free Market. Every town should have one; big cities should have one for every district. It is the authors' opinion that successful, consistent 'Free Markets should be established around the United States, following in the footsteps of the proliferation of Food Not Bombs groups over a decade ago, and that this would significantly increase the visibility and scope of anarchist activity in North America.

Once you get a regular 'Free Market off the ground, it should basically run itself. The challenge is to start things off with enough energy that everyone can see the project's potential, while making sure everyone who gets involved feels an equal sense of ownership and investment.

The first essential element of a good 'Free Market is location. Your 'Free Market should take place on neutral ground—that is, in an area everyone feels an equal claim to or ownership of—so no one will feel more or less comfortable than anyone else. For similar reasons, your location should be a central, visible area. If you can use a space where major public events happen or where a wide range of people are already accustomed to gathering, it will dramatically increase your chances of success.

Many of the best spaces must be rented. It doesn't make sense to pay to hold a free event, but it probably won't do to hold your 'Free Market in somebody's back yard, either. If you do have to pay a permit fee, be clever about raising the funds for it. It compromises the integrity of the event to have to put out a donation jar to cover expenses, and those donations will inevitably fall short; it's better to find a location that is free or cheap enough to cover privately, or else raise funds through independent benefit events. Reservation procedures are also problematic in that they position one person as responsible for the entire event, the exact opposite of the horizontal structure you're trying to promote. The militant solution we've tested is to start out paying permits for a space, then stop once the event has gained enough support to weather a conflict with the powers that be. This will be much more difficult in some contexts than others, of course; shoot for the stars, but appraise your situation realistically.

The next step is to advertise. Sure, you should post fliers and send out emails to every listserv you can possibly think of, but that's only the beginning. You can take handbills around and give them out at bus stops, public events, in neighborhoods and

apartment complexes; you should also see if local radio stations will run Public Service Announcements for you, or if local papers can run a listing or even a story on your event. If you come into conflict with city officials or anyone else, treat it as another opportunity to solicit media coverage. In our town people have taken the yard signs produced by politicians and real estate agencies and painted over them, then redistributed them throughout town; we also hang banners by major intersections a week in advance. We used to do the latter on town property, until we got in a spat with a petty official over it; now we put the same banners a few feet away, on private property owned by sympathetic locals or in places town employees are too lazy to reach.

Don't stop at approaching the official representatives of a group—talk to the rank and file so your outreach efforts don't depend on authority figures but extend directly to the people you want to invite. Forget about government officials—they're too tied up in red tape to think about your event as anything but a headache—but do contact the workers at homeless shelters, interfaith councils, and other social support institutions: they're probably so overwhelmed and underequipped that they'll be thrilled to direct people to your 'Free Market for additional resources.

Make all your fliers, signs, and announcements bilingual, or else produce them in different languages for different contexts. At every 'Free Market, put out a sign-up list so people who want to receive news of the next one or coordinate with other organizers can leave their contact information.

Next, brainstorm all the possible sources of things to give away. The more you bring to the 'Free Market yourself, the more excited others will be about the event, and the more they will expect from themselves as participants. Go through your closets, and encourage everyone you know to do the same. Of course you can dumpster bread and vegetables—but is it possible employees might slip you a little on the side, too? Visit colleges at the end of each semester, corporations that are going out of business, and wealthy neighborhoods where they leave perfectly good items sitting out on the curb. Get all your friends together the night before to cook a nutritious meal and a few hundred delicious cookies.

Make sure it's not easy to tell who is contributing what, both to avoid any implications of charity and to forestall speculation as to whence certain items came. If a team wants to raid the basement of a racist, sexist fraternity and redistribute their unused VCRs to the people, that's their own business, right?

Don't stop at gathering objects—a good 'Free Market is about people interacting with each other, not just taking and leaving things. Organize games, musical improvisations, and other participatory activities that can incorporate chance passers-by. Set up displays and dioramas for the shy but inquisitive.

Solicit participants person by person. As a rule of thumb, one personal invitation is worth a hundred fliers. Invite an accomplished storyteller, a hairstylist, a popular folk musician, a collective of spoken word artists, a specialist in therapeutic massage, a portrait painter, a bicycle mechanic, an automobile mechanic, and everyone else can you think of or run into. Offer to help provide whatever resources they need.

Consider what services others at the 'Market may need, as well. You could have someone with a truck available to make deliveries, or someone organizing children's activities in case a lot of overburdened parents show up. In some situations, you should have a team designated in advance to deal with police, media, or other troublemakers.

Coordinate with other groups to broaden the scope of your 'Free Market. A dance troupe is coming to your town for the weekend; can they put in an appearance? How about a barbershop quartet, a team of champion skateboarders, a wholistic health care provider, a symphony orchestra? You're not just keeping old clothes and stale bagels in circulation, you're introducing an entirely different economic system that can provide as much diversity as capitalism, if not more! Make sure that comes across at every 'Free Market.

Finally, make sure you have a plan for what to do with the leftovers! The local thrift shop or goodwill may be thrilled to get a big shipment in from you, or it may not be what they want at all, in which case you'll have to either have a place to store it all for the next 'Free Market or a means of disposing of it. Clean up the site of your 'Free Market meticulously; you'll benefit from having a reputation for being responsible in this regard.

Once your 'Free Markets have taken off, you can move on to other Really Really Free programs: free movie showings and other entertainment events, free education projects, free housing occupations! The sky's the limit once people have a taste of real freedom.

The Tale of One 'Free Market: An Epic Struggle, a Triumphant Victory

Our story takes place in a small town like many others in the US. This town is known for its pedestrian-friendly layout and liberal population. There's no college, but a state university is located in the larger town a bicycle ride away, and three medium-size cities are within an hour's drive. Some people have lived here their whole lives, but many others have moved here over the past decade or two; property costs have increased accordingly, increasing the pressure on poorer residents. Class conflict appears to be at a low level, however; at first glance, a visitor might assume everyone is as affluent as the customers at the expensive co-op downtown. In fact, there is a disenfranchised class—consisting of the remainder of the area's longtime black population, the Latino laborers who have followed employment opportunities here more recently, and poor white workers and déclassés—but it is invisible, as most of the town's facilities cater to the young and hip or the wealthy and bourgeois.

And there are anarchists. Alongside the scene of people involved in cooperative housing and organic farming, a small but vigorous anarchist community has developed over the past decade. Unlike many towns where anarchists have established a presence, there's virtually no punk scene: no bands, no shows, no music-oriented subculture. There's also very little drinking. In place of these things, anarchists mingle with the rest of the population and hold excellent dinner parties—and organize social programs.

As of this writing, this town of less than 20,000 hosts a community bicycle repair and distribution program, a radical literature distribution, a free breakfast program for day laborers, a free grocery distribution program for low-income neighborhoods, and a books to prisoners program, among other projects. Most of these are explicitly anarchist, yet serve hundreds of people of widely varying political identification.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. Several of those projects grew up in the momentum generated by the local Really Really Free Markets, which are the subject of this story.

Late in 2003, several people from this area attended a Really Really Free Market at the protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas ministerial in Miami. The following summer, activists organized the state's first Really Really Free Market in a nearby city; it was a one-time event, coinciding with summit protests elsewhere in the region. The next fall, a few friends paid the permit fee to reserve the town commons for the first local 'Free Market. It, too, was conceived as a one-time event; but it was such a success that in early 2005 others joined them in organizing a sequel.

Even at these first couple 'Free Markets, the crowds were fairly diverse, owing to fliers having been distributed in multiple languages and neighborhoods. There were also hints of the controversies that were to

come: rumors circulated that town officials worried the 'Market would take business away from local corporations, and it turned out that town regulations forbid a group from reserving the town commons for the same event more than twice a year. Despite this prohibition, it was decided that additional 'Free Markets should take place, and a new face went to reserve the space in hopes that this would suffice to circumvent the two-use rule.

Regulations or no, it was fortuitous that we started rotating organizational roles early on. This proved invaluable both for resisting concentrations of power within our own circles and weathering our later struggles with the town bureaucracy. We had our first real scandal the following autumn, a year after our initial 'Free Market. By this time, the organization core had drifted to a social circle characterized by more confrontational politics. It was election time, and every major intersection in town was decorated with yard signs proclaiming the virtues of various candidates for office. Many of these yard signs reappeared painted over and stenciled with advertisements of the upcoming 'Market. The local political milieu erupted in a huff; this took some time to pass and was draining for those who took it upon themselves to smooth things over. The scandal drew more media coverage to the 'Free Markets, albeit negative, and contributed to their contentious reputation.

Meanwhile, the 'Markets themselves were doing just fine. The hundreds of people who attended them, who came increasingly from low-income backgrounds, apparently weren't concerned about the private property of local bigwigs.

The watershed juncture arrived spring of 2006. Over the preceding year and a half, organizers had paid hundreds of dollars to reserve the space for the 'Markets, often out of their own pockets. There had long been debates as to what would happen if we stopped paying the reservation fees. Would the government dare set the police on a multigenerational, multiethnic crowd in the center of town? Some felt that they would not, and that it was absurd to pay town officials for the right to provide a public service to the people they purported to serve. Others felt that, while the fees were undesirable, the 'Free Markets just didn't have the support necessary to win a conflict with the town government.

In the end, the former camp carried the day out of necessity: there was a great deal of interest in the next 'Free Market, but no one had money to put up for it. The town Parks and Recreation Department was informed of the planned date, but no one ever showed up to pay the permit fee. Contrary to all fears, the 'Free Market went off without a hitch—it was the most successful one to date.

Another 'Free Market was called for the following month. This time, however, another group had already reserved the space for that day. A town official contacted the person who had most recently signed up to reserve the town commons for a 'Free Market and informed him of this, but refused to facilitate communication with the group. 'Free Market supporters tracked down members of this group themselves, and worked everything out with them; in the end, both events took place, and participants in the 'Free Market assisted the other group in setting up. Town officials later disingenuously referred to this double-booking as one of the problems caused by the refusal to pay the reservation fee, but in fact it was a non-issue at the time.

Still fearing that the authorities might try out intimidation tactics at one of the 'Free Markets to discourage unpermitted use of public space, we invited comrades from other towns who were experienced in "public order" situations to attend. Had we been thinking more clearly, we would have realized in advance that town officials would not act publicly, but rather target individuals underhandedly. That summer, a person who had signed up for an earlier 'Free Market received a letter from a local law firm acting on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department, threatening civil penalties for the unpermitted use of public space.

This intimidation had the effect of making people even more hesitant to have their legal names associated with 'Free Market organizing, but it did not dampen the momentum of the 'Markets. A handbill circulated at the next one listing the phone numbers of prominent town officials, inviting people to call and express their displeasure at the targeting of individuals associated with the 'Markets; it subsequently appeared posted all around town. Officials later complained of having received numerous calls, and the individual who had received the threatening letter never heard from the law firm or the government again.

Despite this, it seemed clear that some sort of showdown with the town bureaucracy was brewing. Heated discussions took place behind the scenes about the best way to handle this. Public support had to be mobilized—but how could this occur without centralizing control or representation of the 'Markets? Should public meetings be held, or would that simply offer a clear target for government repression and reformist infiltration? There were still some who felt that a confrontation with the government was neither feasible nor desirable.

Three decisions were made that greatly influenced the ensuing course of events. First, an even more conscious effort was made to rotate roles: the individuals who had received a lot of attention up to that point were put on the bench, as it were, and from then on it was generally agreed that a person should only fill a given role once—whether that be speaking to the media, publicly defending the 'Free Markets, or coordinating advertising and preparation—before passing it along to another. At the same time, all 'Free Market organizing remained on an informal basis; the idea was that you could do anything you wanted to support the 'Free Markets, as long as in doing so you weren't making decisions for others. This meant that no one could negotiate with the government on behalf of the 'Free Markets, and the 'Markets had no decision-making body other than the entire number of people who participated in them. Throughout this process, organizers benefited from the small size of the town and the lines of communication extending through different social circles.

Second, the 'Free Markets would take place once a month, on a regular day. This solved the problem of someone having to call for each one to take place, and with it some of the remaining problems with power distribution. If the date of each 'Free Market was common knowledge according to a monthly system, there would be no organizers to blame for calling them. Fliers went out listing the next eight months of upcoming 'Free Markets.

Finally, 'Free Market supporters reached out to their friends in a local puppetry troupe to plan a 'Free Market that would surpass all that had come before. These puppeteers had maintained a popular series of local shows for over half a decade, and were considering hosting a puppetry convergence that would draw troupes from around the country. Someone suggested that the convergence be timed to intersect with a 'Free Market, and it was agreed. The puppeteers, not wishing to take the same risks, reserved the town commons, and a joint 'Market-cum-puppetry-festival was announced across the state. In a town known for support of the arts, this was a real coup.

As the date of the festival approached, a struggle over public space issues broke out elsewhere in town when the coop mentioned earlier for its affluent customers attempted to ban public expression on its front lawn. Protests were held, posters appeared wheat-pasted across public walls, newspapers printed debating viewpoints on the issue, and town officials were drawn into the matter. Venomous columnists even accused politicians who took positions in favor of public use of space of being closet anarchists—thanks in part to the 'Free Markets, anarchism was becoming a point of refer-

ence for everyone. In the end, the landlord backed down, ceding victory to those who championed freedom and community over private property.

The week before the festival, in this edgy atmosphere, a town official contacted the puppeteer who had signed up for the space and informed him that if people were going to share food at the event, he would have to pay several hundred dollars for insurance. In two years of 'Free Markets, each of which had featured a tremendous smorgasbord of free food, there had never been any talk of insurance; in fact, a later examination of the wording of town policy revealed that it did not require insurance for events at which food was given away. At the time, however, this phone call provoked some consternation.

The day of the 'Free Market, food was delivered to the site by visiting supporters from out of town; this was part of the policy of rotating high-visibility tasks, so town officials would not have an easy target for repressive measures. A town official stopped one person bearing a pot of beans, informing her that she was not permitted to serve food; she responded that she didn't intend to serve it, and placed it on the table with the rest of the food. He had to content himself with taking photographs of the food to present later on as evidence against the 'Free Market. Meanwhile, another town employee, a hulking fellow in intimidating dress, went around asking for suspected 'Free Market organizers by name; no one answered his queries, of course.

Despite these efforts, the event was a smashing success. Dozens of puppetry troupes came and performed, and hundreds of local families showed up with children in tow. The intersection of the puppetry convergence and the 'Free Market offered the former a marvelous public venue and cemented the reputation of the latter as a valuable community resource.

At this event, a town official who supported the 'Free Markets mentioned that at the meeting of the town government a couple days later there would be a resolution on the table proposing harsher penalties for those who promoted unpermitted events on public property. In retrospect, this was an important turn of events. Had he not passed on this advance warning, everything that followed might have played out differently. Phone trees were activated and a call went out for people to gather at the meeting in opposition to the measure. This was to be the first time 'Free Market supporters had acknowledged the town government in over half a year, and it had to be a show of force.

The night of the meeting, almost thirty 'Free Market supporters arrived at the town hall. They ranged from leather-jacketed teenagers to grey-haired women with long histories of local volunteer work. On his way into the building, the mayor stopped to ask what brought them there; he disingenuously claimed the proposed penalties were not directed at 'Free Market organizers, though he admitted they might affect them. The town lawyer publicly corrected him when he repeated this in the meeting, bluntly stating that the proposal was intended to solve the problems posed by unpermitted use of the town commons.

A couple people spoke in favor of the 'Free Markets; everyone else remained silent but expectant, an unknown quantity for town officials to figure into their calculations. The politicians assured everyone that the 'Free Markets were not under attack, that there would be no arrests made in relation to them, then took advantage of the opportunity to hold forth at length about how there have to be rules and regulations and so on or else everything will just be "anarchy." A reporter subtly poked fun at one town official in corporate newspaper coverage of the meeting, noting that he unironically delivered this threat to a room full of anarchists. In the end, the mayor announced that an "anonymous donor" had offered to pay the reservation fee for the 'Free Market, so long as someone signed up for it. This struck some as a fabrication designed to preserve appearances—a tacit admission that the 'Free Markets could not be stopped.

Hours before the next 'Free Market, someone whose name had been on a reservation form years earlier received an email from a town official again demanding hundreds of dollars of insurance if food was to be shared. The phone trees were activated again, and several dozen people showed up with cookies, cakes, pies, soups, and other delicious foodstuffs to give away in defiance. This time the government did not send anyone to harass participants; they simply posted signs reading "The town has no control over and does not warrant the quality of any food distributed at this event." 'Free Market organizers brought their own signs, one of which was a full yard high and proclaimed "The town government does not sanction the distribution of food at this event; do not sue them or expect them to share food with you. Eat at your own risk—BE GOVERNED AT YOUR OWN RISK." The wording of the town policy regarding insurance at events appeared at the base of the sign, to show how their demand for insurance contradicted their own guidelines. At a later 'Free Market, the same official who had given the heads-up about the meeting expressed approval of this sign, implying that town employees had their hands bound by red tape.

The 'Free Markets continue here to this day, each one a resounding success. Rumor has it that the town government may change the reservation system so a fee is not required for non-profit events in public spaces; in this way, our project has contributed to the general struggle for free access to space in our community. As of this writing, several other cities in this state have regular 'Free Markets following the model we've developed. We have long-term plans to continue building an anarchist infrastructure in our town, running parallel with the hierarchical structures imposed by the government and corporations, with the goal of eventually supplanting them. In the meantime, our 'Free Markets are an excellent way to support the needy and nourish our culture of resistance.

In the end, the conflict with the town government gave us opportunities we would never otherwise have had. We were able to bring up questions about the distribution of wealth and power that otherwise go unasked in this society; likewise, we were able to differentiate our approach to social support programs from those of liberals and religious groups. Had the town not raised such a fuss, people might have mistaken the 'Free Markets as another state-sponsored charity event.

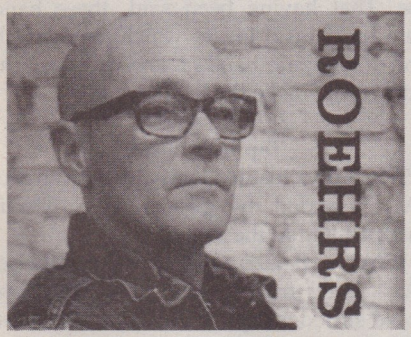
Our experience demonstrates the tremendous advantage amorphous, informal networks have when they enter into conflict with formal, hierarchical groups. All of the power the government had to bring to bear against us depended on there being specific representatives for them to target, and to a lesser extent on public disinterest. In maintaining horizontal structures and public anonymity while mobilizing massive grassroots support, we were able to outmaneuver them in every instance.

We also showed that direct action gets the goods. Even from a reformist perspective, our approach was more effective in producing concrete results than any other strategy could have been. Had we simply petitioned government officials or attempted to get a sympathetic politician into office, we would never have gotten anywhere. By presenting our regular use of the town commons as a done deal, we made the authorities an offer they couldn't refuse. Every low-income family that leaves each 'Free Market with a bag of groceries benefits from this.

Our efforts have borne fruit in other ways, too. Last Mayday, when there were massive marches in support of immigrants' rights around the country, many of the ones in our state were organized in conjunction with liberal or communist front groups and bore a correspondingly authoritarian character. Here, thanks to the work we had done on the 'Free Markets, we were fortunate enough to be involved in the organizing along with

immigrants and immigrants' rights advocates. Consequently, the march that occurred here was distinctly more radical in form and content: it took place without any permits, occupying the town's main thoroughfare for several hours and culminating in a free dinner, dancing, and movie at the town commons. The connections that developed at this event later enabled people to coordinate solidarity actions during the assault on Oaxaca.

We shouldn't underestimate the importance of small, concrete victories such as this one. In an era when radicals are used to losing every struggle they enter, it is important to set realistic goals and achieve them, and thus get used to doing what it takes to win. Perhaps the lessons we've learned here can't be applied in every town across the United States, but there must be countless other towns like our own. It's up to you to discover whether our successes can be repeated where you live.



Cut Loose

Holy fuck! Black Water Music has two thrash monsters climbing out of the crypt to crush your skull!

The first black, soul-piercing metal punk assault is by DEMOLITION with the magnificent brutality of their *Mob of Wolves* LP. This record sleeve is absolutely awe-inspiring! DEMOLITION uses every evil power they possess to steer you down the dark path with the *Mob of Wolves* opus. These Japanese black-noise merchants have harnessed the satanic metal guitar froth and fury to pulverize you victims! The men of DEMOLITION rip through "Karma," "Jack the Ripper III," "Soul Stealer," "As Long As I Live," "Live and Let Die," and "Mob of Wolves—Es Tamos Pandilla de Lobos." Fuck! This relentless thrash metal brew conjures up visions of humans impaled on electric guitars and hapless children running and screaming into the boiling cauldron! Fans of VENOM and SLAYER should pay close attention!

The second burning Japanese thunderbolt on Black Water is the band AGE and their *The Spider Rules Your Emotions* EP. This EP is housed in another beautiful and lovingly detailed artistic package. AGE come screaming out of the darkness, clawing at your face like a metal-clad banshee! The vocals eviscerate while the guitars slash and burn everything in their path! This thrash-metal-obliteration is completely in the service of Satan! Deep guttural doom-filled singing rides atop manic, chugging, death-metal guitar musings! The drummer propels the entire behemoth into bleak oblivion! This is fuckin' great metallic punk rock with the corpses scurrying every-which-a-way to get out of the light! Order your DEMOLITION and AGE records from Black Water Records, PO Box 5223, Portland, Oregon 97208-5223.

Fuck! The people at No Way Records keep hammering on you fucks with strong punk rock releases! The airwaves are still reverberating with the shell shock of the STRUNG UP/DIRECT CONTROL split LP (co-released with Tank Crimes)! You listened enthusiastically to the *Life's a Dead End* EP by CARDIAC ARREST. Now you get No Way #9 featuring SOCIAL CIRCKLE from Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. SOCIAL CIRCKLE comes right out of the chute with flared nostrils on their song, "Static Eyes." This is snotty punk rock with a vicious bad attitude! "Static Eyes" is guitar driven snarl with lots of punch! One minute of pure bile for you pissed off punks! Next up you get "Cut Loose" with a frantic rock n' roll message: "...He can't live / Just another man / With only hate to give / He's got a gun / He's got a knife / He's gonna cut loose / Gonna kill tonight." You're fucked!

Turn this rocking seven inch slab over and you get "Can't Take It," about an unhappy relationship: "...When I'm out / I dread you showing up / Your mouth never stops moving / The best times that I've had with you / Are the times we've had apart..." Fucking bitter lyrics for you punks in love!

The final punk rock tune for you losers is a political statement, "USSA" is about the Republican Neo-Nazis who run the USA – "Divide and rule / With fear and hate / That's the agenda of the red states." The SOCIAL CIRCKLE *Static Eyes* EP is strong punk rock from start to finish!

The second punk blast for you punks on No Way Records is the excellent *No Bullshit Volume 2*, featuring six bands. Several of these punk bands will blow you out of your boots! First up, is the aforementioned SOCIAL CIRCKLE continuing to do what they do best—rock your fucking world! SOCIAL CIRCKLE clobbers you with "Burns Me Up!" Fuck yes! These punks only know one pace—full speed ahead with no regard for collateral damage! Keep your eye on these fucks! SOCIAL CIRCKLE is hell-bent on decimating your sorry little reality!

Next up is the band, RABIES, with their punk tune "Shasted." This rough and ready skater crew shares some advice for you politically-correct dribble-dicks who allow your woman to walk all over you and treat you with disrespect. Very good!

The final song on side A is performed by BRAIN HANDLE. These punks offer a well-crafted, fast, melodic punk anthem called "Disheveled." The guitars boil and surge while the vocals convey a sense of urgency. This is a good song!

Side B on the No Way Records *No Bullshit Volume 2* compilation leads off with a youthful, inspired rant by San Francisco Bay Area hardcore punks WARKRIME. For their selection, WARKRIME chooses "Everybody Hates Me," and they deliver the words with conviction!

Right on the heels of the frantic WARKRIME hardcore attack, is none other than the much lauded and regaled CARDIAC ARREST! These motherfuckers are so punk, so brutal, so fucking dangerous, that many clubs and record labels are too frightened to contact them! And for good reason! The punk song CARDIAC ARREST plays "Fat Lord." This will leave your speakers in shards and your brain hanging upside-down! CARDIAC ARREST is presently on an unstoppable punk-rock tear, laying everything before them to waste! Last month saw the reissue of the fucking stunning hammer of an EP, the *Get Away From Me*. CARDIAC ARREST is leaving a swath of bruised and bloodied punk bodies in their wake! Fuck yes!

The final song on this six-band compilation is by WASTED TIME and the song is entitled, "Enemies of Common Sense." WASTED TIME finishes you off with the full complement of punk weapons in their arsenal! The vocals are over-the-top manic and shouted. The guitars are a fucking full-fisted barrage of punk steel! WASTED TIME gets you by the throat and doesn't let go until you are hanging limp like a savaged ragdoll. Fuck yes! Now that's a no-holds-barred punk rock finish for you fucks!

Last up on No Way Records roster this month are local Bay Area (San Francisco and Tiburon, CA) men, WARKRIME. On the *Give War a Chance* EP, WARKRIME lays down nine short, pissed-off punk bursts. The bad attitude and raw punk delivery of this relatively new band of punks is to be commended! Let's watch WARKRIME to see if they incorporate some of SOCIAL CIRCKLE's or CARDIAC ARREST's massive punk force into their cache of armaments. Upcoming on No Way: an ACID REFLUX EP and a DOUBLE NEGATIVE LP. For No Way Records product contact www.nowayrecords.com.

For you punks that think you are fucking tough enough, we present two fucking heavy hitters: NUNSLAUGHTER and BRODY'S MILITIA with a raucous EP that even made Beelzebub's dick wither!

NUNSLAUGHTER, those black metal

heathen representing "Hell's Headbangers" from Medina, Ohio, come to fuck up your life! The first nasty slice of metal to violate you is "How I Want to Die" by NUNSLAUGHTER. Fucking A! This shit is unbridled and dark power thrash ripping and gouging at your entrails! Song two by NUNSLAUGHTER is a fucking ruthless, fast, version of "Terrorain," originally written and performed by SEPTIC DEATH. Fuck yes! For their final song, NUNSLAUGHTER attacks your senses with that MISFITS blood fest of yore "We Bite." Fucking great! NUNSLAUGHTER are "punk as fuck!"

Flip this venal slab over and BRODY'S MILITIA castrates you with a blood-curdling cover of the CELTIC FROST song, "Morbid Tales." BRODY'S MILITIA shows no mercy on you little panty-waists as they slice and dice you useless wimps! This is, as BRODY'S MILITIA promised you, a "tribute through blasphemy." To end your night with major contusions, BRODY'S MILITIA's side of the record culminates with the open-air carnage and a spine-crushing version of "Ready to Fuck," originally by SARCÓFAGO. Fuck all! Get the fucking body bags! Mr.'s Shaun, SIM and Digestor, provide the appropriate horror/skull artwork that adorns all four sides of this magnificent gatefold sleeve. For your copy of this crime against nature write Haunted Hotel Records, PO Box 348, Yonkers, NY 10710.

Until next month... See you fucks at the bar!

I wanted to clarify something that I wrote about last month, namely the dissolution of *Maximum*'s newsstand distributor, Big Top/Independent Press Association. We had gotten the news of their end at the eleventh hour before print, so I threw some words about it together for my column, but didn't really get to the heart of the matter. What can I say, really, except that their shit was severely fucked. While we enjoyed a number of great years with Big Top/IPA, an organization that was supposedly "one of us," our relationship with them had drastically soured over the year and half leading up to their demise. Not only was this the result of their non-payment on the thousands of dollars we relied on from them to keep *MRR* up and running, but also because of how they handled the situation of their financial disarray. It was a sadly classic case of an indie acting as bad if not worse than any corporate label/distributor—they lied, obfuscated details, went out of their ways to keep magazines from talking to each other, gave us a crazy runaround, and basically acted like the snakes that they had become, looking to deceive us at every turn, all while continuing to assure us that they had our best interests at heart. Even days before Big Top went under, I contacted them for the zillionth time about the thousands of dollars they (still) owed us, and was told that we'd be paid out after the start of the new year. January second rolled around, and we got word that Indy Press was no more. Fuckers. Anyway, it became very clear at some point over the course of the past year that they were distinctly *not* on our side anymore—I think this was when Martin started joking about stealing anything we could find at their office on our too-routine visits to try to shake some money out of them ("G, grab that mouse. *Grab it!!*"). This was and continues to be a sad realization—here was a non-profit started with the express goal to provide aid and support to independent press, especially magazines with radical political or cultural aims, and they fucked us over worse than (almost) anyone ever has. I guess I've learned this lesson the hard way at *Maximum* more than once—the people you trust the most have the greatest capacity to disappoint you, rip you off, or fuck you over. I said last month that I was sad to see the end of Indy Press, but by that I meant more the ideal behind that organization, which I have to admit died long before the actual organization itself.

So, what is to be done? We're using this as a lesson to move even further towards a DIY ethic—no more Mordam, no more Big Top, just *Maximum Rocknroll* working to provide a functional, legitimate alternative to dry commercial culture well into the 2000s. If you want to, you can definitely help us out by subscribing, carrying the zine in your store or distro, taking it on tour with you, or harassing local bookstores or record shops to carry it. For more details, feel free to get in touch: distro@maximumrocknroll.com

* * *

I cleaned my room tonight not long before I sat down to write this column, and found some notes that I had taken from Arwen on the first or second day she trained me on *MRR*'s editing policies a week or two into my coordinatorship. With both of our scribbles and innumerable details all over some old record reviews, I used those notes well into my first year on the job. I found the notes buried under a pile of papers on my little blue desk (formerly Clara's desk, and before that Arwen's), and finally, after staring at them for a while, I stuffed them into a bag full of recycling and brought them downstairs to the trash. Let's be honest: I don't need them anymore, I have that shit memorized. But maybe more importantly, I'm not going to be here for much longer—just one more issue after this one—and in my spot, in my room, maybe at that desk, will be somebody new. It's time to start letting go. Strange and sad, but exciting too. But for right now, see you next month.

* * *

I got really long winded in my year-end best of in this issue, so there wasn't space to tack on my top live shows list. I figured I'd stick said list into my column instead (I mean, you want to see it right?), with the caveat that this list—even more than my top ten records—is highly subjective, having almost as much to do with friends present, jokes told, mood achieved, etc., as anything else. That having been said, these bands were truly inspiring to watch, as were the tens of amazing bands I saw this year that didn't quite make the list.

Top Live 2006:

1. SEX VID – Justin's House (San Francisco, CA) – Handed my glasses off to Martin, somersaulted in the pit.

2. LBAL – Balazo Gallery (San Francisco, CA) – Their return home from tour, Tobia crowd surfed, people *lost their fucking minds.*

3. GORILLA ANGREB – Some bike shop (Philadelphia, PA) – Best punk band in the world, bikes hanging overhead, many old friends.

4. MIKA MIKO – Pine Street House (Oakland, CA) – Paint bomb exploded, drunk Arwen and Kat in the pit, Britton wall-walked, Misfits cover.

5. CONDENADA/BOOM BOOM KID/OUTRAGED – Balazo Gallery (San Francisco, CA) – All incredible, inspiring bands, very few scenesters, mojitos flowed like water, salsa dancing until the wee hours after the show.

6. HARD SKIN – Balazo Gallery (San Francisco, CA) – Real skinheads apparently not in on the joke, Fat Bob and I shared a moment.

7. PELIGRO SOCIAL – Balazo Gallery (San Francisco, CA) –An all Latino punk bill, amazing punk girl in all blood splattered white denim outfit doing the worm.

8. BLACK FORK/SOCIAL UNREST/et al – Gilman Street 20th anniversary show (Berkeley, CA) – Zillions of kids, old-timers moshing to Social Unrest, Cretin on vocals.

9. FUCKED UP – The Beach (San Francisco, CA) – Lady of the Lake emerged from the sewers to attempt stagedive on unsuspecting crowd, Britton saved the day. Damian car-

ried the PA around to keep kids from knocking it over, I moshed.

10. SURRENDER/YOUNG OFFENDERS/ PELIGRO SOCIAL – The Long Haul (Berkeley, CA) – Dan's fifteen guitar pedals, Dougie's dance moves, the debut of my pink Ben Sherman jacket at a punk show, Yay Area yo.

(Some honorable mentions: No Slogan, NTN, Witch Hunt, Pedestrians, Human Bastard, Firmeza 10, Jump Off a Building, Defect Defect, Tragedy, and uh, New Model Army.)

* * *

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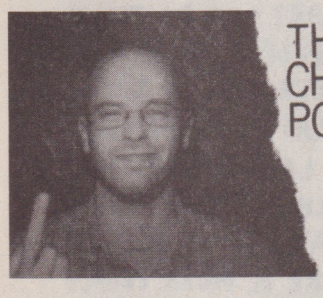

THREE CHORD POLITICS

chris hubbard

Golnar's column this month touched on the problems the magazine has had over the last year and a half with our former distributor. It's times like these that I'm reminded of what a struggle it is to keep a project like *Maximum Rocknroll* alive. Often it seems like there is no real possibility for rest—as time marches forward, deadlines loom, rent and bills come due.

This condition is common to us all. Despite the picture painted by advertisers and television sitcoms, life today, even for those of us lucky enough to live in the wealthiest nation in the first world, is not all ease and leisure. Outside of the ultra-rich and those young enough to be supported by their parents, we all must work daily to earn money. We need to buy food, clothing, a place to live and sleep. The same goes for our bodies themselves. We need a continuous intake of protein and vitamins. Our lungs breathe in air; our hearts beat every second to spread the oxygen throughout our body. If this were to cease to happen, our bodies would fail and we would perish.

For *MRR*, each month is a constant, continuous search for content for the magazine and money to pay our landlord and printer. We need these things like a body needs food, water, and oxygen. And like a body, we have a will to survive—a strong one. We can get by on less than the ideal amount of money if our distributor goes under, owing us thousands of dollars. We might be not be as comfortable, we might be under more stress, but we are still alive.

* * *

I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to shitworker Shane White, who read in my column in last month's issue about the missing disc from the Incredible Kidda Band double LP in the *MRR* record collection. Improbably, he had a copy of the very same disc, sent to him years ago as a promo of sorts from a friend in Europe. Long story short, the missing disc has been replaced, and the double LP set is once again happily complete. Since then, I've noticed that I'm not only sleeping better, but the voices in my head have almost disappeared completely. 2007 is looking up!

* * *

As always, I can be reached by email at: chris@maximumrocknroll.com, or you can send me rare records, original Pettibon artwork, and other cool shit c/o Kill Test / PMB 241 / 530 Divisadero Street / San Francisco, CA 94117 / U$A

PEOPS

Josh MacPhee – 10/27/2K6 – Victoria BC Canada

I met Josh at the Victoria International Arts Symposium in October of 2K6 – we were both invited to speak on different panels – Josh was the keynote speaker for the panel on street art & he did an amazing presentation – Josh has been an active street artist – stenciller & poster-maker for over a decade – he also curates the Celebrate People's History poster series which produces posters drawn by different artists illuminating little known histories of social justice movements – Josh also founded Just Seeds – a radical art distribution project which is currently undergoing some restructuring but you can still find them online at www.justseeds.org – Josh's first book *Stencil Pirates* was published in 2K4 by Soft Skull Press & he has two more books coming out any day now – *Reproduce & Revolt: A Graphic Toolbox for the 21st Century Activist* (Soft Skull Press) & *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority* (AK Press)

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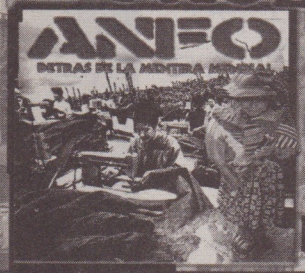

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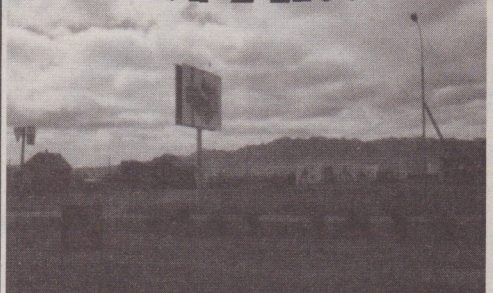

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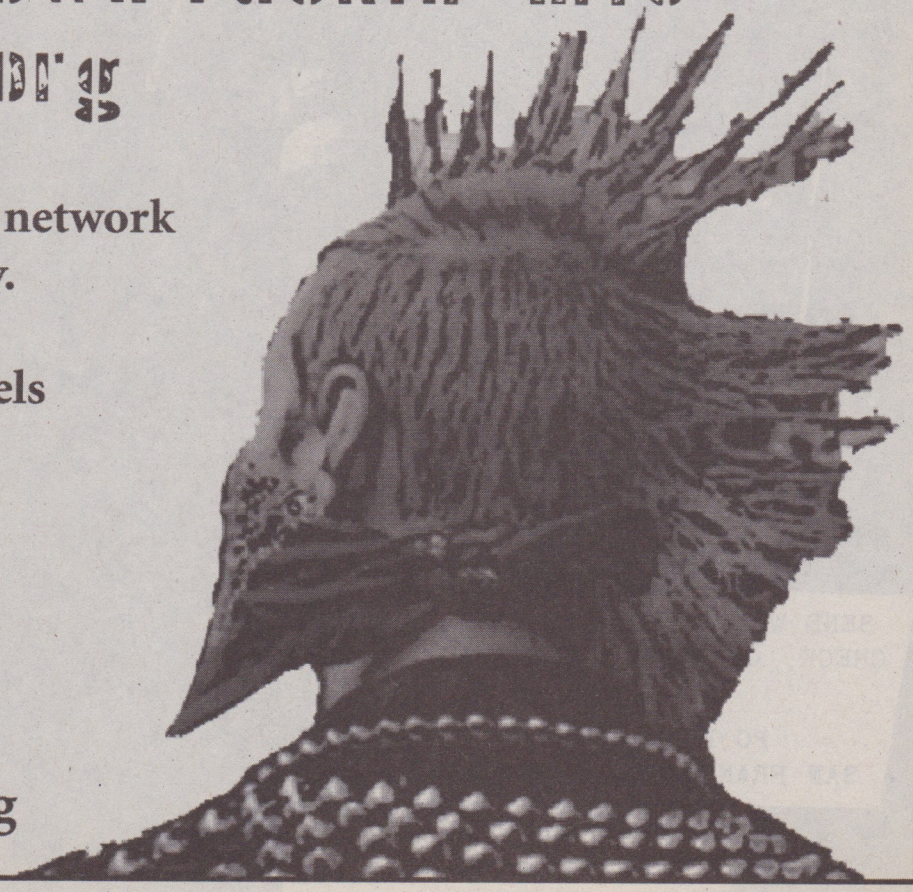

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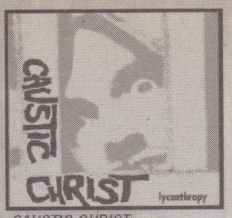

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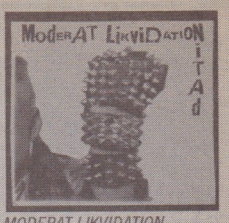

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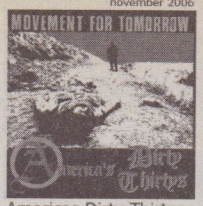

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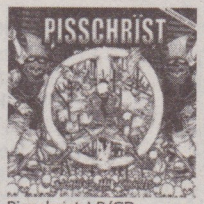

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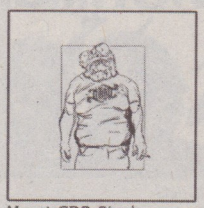
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MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #286 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE

ANTI-CHOICE? ANTI-HEALTH!

By Ann Friedman, *The American Prospect.*

A pill that could show promise in treating breast cancer, depression, and even schizophrenia, might never make it onto the market because it also provides an effective way to induce abortions.

In the mid-1990s, the abortion wars were at a fever pitch over the impending approval of RU-486. Time magazine called it "The Pill that Changes Everything," *The New York Times Magazine* dubbed it a "little white bombshell," and anti-abortion leaders said over and over that this drug was dangerous because it would make having an abortion "as trivial as taking aspirin." Pro-choicers, for their part, were invigorated by the possibility of giving women another abortion option, one they hoped would let them largely bypass abortion clinics and the attendant protesters at the gates.

But for all the controversy about mifepristone, the active drug in RU-486, there wasn't much attention paid to the fact that many doctors were already providing abortions in pill form using a drug called methotrexate, which had been FDA-approved for years as a treatment for cancer, arthritis, and Crohn's disease. Because methotrexate was useful in many more ways than abortion, it was more loosely regulated and readily available. And because the methotrexate was approved for a variety of illnesses, it was politically impossible for anti-abortion groups to push the FDA to revoke its approval.

"Nobody's trying to get that drug off the market," says Beth Jordan, medical director for the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals. "We want to see mifepristone enjoy that same place on the market. If the science is there."

That's why, even before mifepristone was FDA-approved as an abortion pill, pro-choice groups began supporting research into whether the drug can be used to treat depression, cancer, and reproductive system disorders. So far the results are encouraging. In November, one researcher attracted considerable press when she released findings that she had successfully used mifepristone to treat breast cancer in mice. The announcement gave pro-choicers hope that they were a step closer to pushing for FDA approval for a use other than abortion.

Although only about 10 percent of the 1.29 million abortions performed in the United States every year use the medication method, the battle over the drug has been particularly bitter. While a woman must obtain mifepristone at a clinic, the actual abortion happens in the privacy of her home. Currently, medication abortion is common in many countries where the procedure is illegal, because it's decidedly less risky than using a wire hanger. In fact, in the absence of a doctor, it's the safest and easiest way for a woman to perform a do-it-yourself abortion. Which is another reason why pro-choice groups would like it approved for alternate uses and see its availability increase. If abortion were ever outlawed in the United States, mifepristone would become perhaps the most important—and the most common—abortion option.

It took pro-choice activists 12 years to get the abortion pill—of which mifepristone is one of two components—approved by the FDA. Though it had been used in some European countries since the early '80s, American abortion politics caused the drug's European makers to shy away from patenting and marketing the drug here. After a series of hang-ups, clinical trials were completed in the late '90s and the FDA agreed to consider approval. Despite objections from anti-abortion groups and conservative congressmen, mifepristone was FDA-approved for abortions in September 2000. (More recently, the drug came under renewed scrutiny when at least four women died of a rare bacterial infection after taking the pill. The anti-abortion movement seized on the deaths to push for a ban on mifepristone. But after two more people died of the same rare bacteria, many experts questioned mifepristone's role in the deaths.

Given the politics at play, it's not surprising that mifepristone is one of the most strictly regulated drugs in America. As a concession to the anti-abortion movement, the FDA gave the drug a "Phase 4" classification. This means that, even with a doctor's prescription, you can't get it at a pharmacy. The drug can only be dispensed by a licensed physician, who must order each $500 dose directly from the manufacturer. The restriction also prevents doctors from prescribing mifepristone off-label, a common and legal practice generally considered safe if supported by research. With Phase 4 drugs, the doctor needs special permission from the FDA, which it will only grant if a patient faces a life-threatening illness such as cancer. For a painful but not lethal condition such as uterine fibroids, for which studies have shown mifepristone is sometimes the best treatment, doctors have no way to legally prescribe it.

A great deal, therefore, rides on the outcome of research into mifepristone's other uses: Jordan hopes the drug's connotation will change from "abortion drug that can treat cancer" to "cancer drug that's also used in abortions." But here too, abortion politics have stymied the effort. Due to the drug's political significance, researchers are cautious about studying it—two breast cancer researchers in Canada who were studying mifepristone received death threats from anti-abortion activists. And because mifepristone is not a patented drug, none of the major pharmaceutical companies stands to gain financially by expanding the number of uses for which it's FDA-approved. This means finding private funders, many of whom don't want to touch a hot-button drug.

"I feel that everything here has gone slower than we would have thought," says Feminist Majority President Eleanor Smeal. "We have this terrible political battle going on that has made everything more difficult."

Government agencies have quietly funded a handful of the mifepristone studies, even though President Bush is on record as opposing the FDA's decision to approve the drug. Most of the money comes from private individuals and foundations, with women's groups like the Feminist Majority providing logistical support. A University of Rochester study that has been going on for more than a year is showing that the drug holds great promise in treating uterine fibroids, and Stanford University is testing its effectiveness on clinical depression and schizophrenia. In November, Dr. Eva Lee at the University of California, Irvine, got substantial media attention for her finding that mifepristone may successfully combat genetically linked breast cancer.

Organizations like the Feminist Majority openly acknowledge that while they are thrilled at these medical findings, they're even more excited at the political promise. Jim Sedlak, vice president of the American Life League (ALL), opposes the research for the same reasons. "They are desperately looking for a way to justify this product so that if abortion is made illegal in the US, they can still sell this product and claim it is for something else," he says, noting that all would oppose FDA approval of the drug for any new purpose—even if it could save the lives of women with breast cancer. That position probably won't find great public appeal— in fact, the pro-choice movement is banking on it.

EX-BLACK PANTHERS CHARGED IN SAN FRANCISCO POLICE OFFICER'S 1971 DEATH AT STATION

From an article in *The San Francisco Chronicle*

Eight veterans of the Black Panther Party (BPP)—seven of whom are accused of belonging to the Black Liberation Army (BLA)—were arrested IN on charges stemming from the 1971 shooting death of San Fransisco Police Sgt. John V. Young.

The August 29, 1971 attack on the Ingleside Police Station came only eight days after San Quentin prison guards gunned down BPP Field Marshal "Soledad Brother" George Jackson. The murder of Jackson provoked threats of retaliation and even sparked the Attica Prison rebellion.

Seven of the men arrested, all suspected BLA members, were charged with murder and conspiracy. They are Ray Michael Boudreaux, 64, of Altadena; Richard Brown, 65, of San Francisco; Herman Bell, 59, and Jalil Abdul Muntaqim formerly known as Anthony Bottom, 55, both currently incarcerated in New York state; Henry Watson Jones, 71, of Altadena; Francisco Torres, 58, of Queens, New York; and Harold Taylor, 58, of Panama City, Florida.

Another suspect, Ronald Stanley Bridgeforth, 62, was still being sought on murder and conspiracy charges. Authorities believe he could be in France, Belize, or Tanzania.

Taylor and two others faced murder charges in 1973, but the case was dismissed after a San Francisco judge that torture was used to extract confessions from the men. San Francisco Police Department Inspectors Frank McCoy and Ed Erdelatz were present for the interrogation and torture which consisted of stripping the men naked and beating them with a lead pipe, blind folding them and throwing wool blankets soaked with boiling water over their bodies, placing electric probes on their genitals and other body parts, inserting an electric cattle prod in their anus, punching and kicking, and slamming them into walls while blindfolded.

McCoy and Erdelatz came out of retirement to lead the investigation when the case was reopened sometime in 2002. The decision to re-investigate the incident followed the Department of Justice's expanding prosecution of political crimes in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Bell's attorney Stuart Hanlon called the arrests a "prosecution based on vengeance and hate from the '60s." "There's a law enforcement attitude that they hate these people, the Panthers," Hanlon said. "Now they're going after old men."

As in other recent political cold cases, and even some new cases, it seems that the prosecution relied on the grand jury system to gather evidence that had for so long eluded them. In 2005 five former Panthers including Ray Michael Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Harold Taylor, and John Bowman were jailed for not cooperating with the grand jury. Jones is now a Pasadena area a real estate appraiser in his '70s. He refused to cooperate because of the coercive and punitive nature of the grand jury proceedings. He said "I spent six weeks in San Francisco County Jail, and I'd spend six years if necessary."

BERLIN SQUAT/COMMUNITY SPACE UNDER ATTACK

(translated from the German, available at http://koepi.squat.net)

Statement from the Köpi, a legalized squat in Berlin currently home to about sixty people and a number of autonomous political and cultural projects.

"You've sold the rest of the city—Köpi is still ours!"

For over 17 years a community space has existed at Köpenicker Str. 137, a non-commercial space that is open for political and cultural projects of all kinds. But the idea that people both can and want to organize themselves without any economic interest is apparently beyond the imagination of some of the politicians in charge of this city, who instead seem to consider this space a threat.

During the night, the main courtyard of the Köpi, as well as some of its rooms, was invaded [by the police]. The reason given for the intrusion was not "disruption of the peace" or anything similar, but was related to a license to sell drinks [at the Köpi bar]. The Köpi is not the first target in [the neighborhood of] Mitte to be removed from the picture of the new, dressed-up city center in this way. The authorities of this area have also used this strategy against projects like Subversiv, Schokoladen, the Open Space, and numerous others.

According to diverse news sources (rbb online, Tagesspiegel, Polizeiticker) the Office of Commerce asked for help from the LKA [Office of Criminal Investigation] to close this "illegal Diskothek."

During their search for the people in charge [of the Köpi], [the police] took down the information of the twelve people present and threw them out of the room. What's more, they seized the cash box and the huge "income" of 18 Euros it held. The fact that there was so little money in the cash box of an "illegal disco" on a Friday night in Berlin Mitte, and that there were only twelve people present, shows how ridiculous this effort was.

They also filmed the rooms that they had access to, and took some posters, flyers, stickers and various materials that lay out for anyone to take for free. Independent witnesses were not allowed to be present during this investigation, and the officials wandered the rooms unregulated for at least twenty minutes. This massive intrusion in the community space is also thought to be an attempt at intimidation, related to the upcoming G8 summit. The task force was especially diligent in this regard, and even scratched stickers off the walls with their knives.

During the investigation of the rooms, it was not possible to get into the courtyard or the community space. Nevertheless, more and more people gathered [outside], so that around 30 minutes after the arrival of the police there were about 100 people present. After the people tried several times to get into the Köpi, there were some small altercations. The police mission was prematurely broken up, which was echoed loudly in the press as being solely due to the "inexperience of the operation's leader."

After a short moment of shock and a pause for breath, there was a spontaneous occupation of the large intersection in front of the Köpi. It was followed a loud and determined demonstration throughout [the neighboring district of] Kreuzberg, which was dispersed by the cops at the intersection of Oranienstraße and Skalitzer Straße. According to reports so far, there were no injuries and no arrests. Since then, (civil) police cars have patrolled the street in front of the Köpi. filming it.

Around 30 people visited the Office of Commerce for Mitte, to obtain a comment on the incident. The office manager explained that they had followed "a tip" on an illegal bar. He explained further that the circumstances had been sufficiently clarified, and the Office of Commerce had "no further need to investigate." As for the results of the investigation, he couldn't (or didn't want to) say anything at this time. At the BVV Mitte, the Green party will hold an inquiry on the police action, although it will only be restricted to questions of police tactics and management.

We will not allow ourselves to be intimidated by past or future police actions. We have fought for this space, and we will not let it be taken from us—and not just the Köpi!

PENTAGON VIEWING AMERICANS' BANK RECORDS

From an article by Lolita Baldor Washington (AP)

The Pentagon and to a lesser extent the CIA have been using a little-known power to look at the banking and credit records of hundreds of Americans and others suspected of terrorism or espionage within the United States, officials said.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said Saturday the Defense Department "makes requests for information under authorities of the National Security Letter statutes…but does not use the specific term National Security Letter in its investigatory practice."

Whitman did not indicate the number of requests that have been made in recent years, but said authorities operate under the Right to Financial Privacy Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act and the National Security Act.

"These statutory tools may provide key leads for counterintelligence and counterterrorism investigations," Whitman said. "Because these are requests for information rather than court orders, a DOD request under the NSL statutes cannot be compelled absent court involvement."

"It is our understanding that the intelligence community agencies make such requests on a limited basis," said Carl Kropf, a spokesman for the Office of the National Intelligence Director, which oversees all sixteen of the spy agencies in the government.

The national security letters permit the executive branch to seek records about people in terror and spy investigations without a judge's approval or grand jury subpoena. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the lead agency on domestic counterterrorism and espionage, has issued thousands of national security letters since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Whitman said Defense Department "counterintelligence investigators routinely coordinate…with the FBI."

The national security letters have prompted criticism and court challenges from civil liberties advocates who claim they invade the privacy of Americans' lives, even though banks and other financial institutions typically turn over the financial records voluntarily.

The New York Times reported on expanded use of the technique by the Pentagon and CIA in an article posted on the internet. The vast majority of national security letters are issued by the FBI, but in very rare circumstances they have been used by the CIA before and after 9/11, said a U.S. intelligence official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity.

The CIA has used these non-compulsory letters in espionage investigations and other circumstances, the official said. "It is very uncommon for the agency to be issuing these letters," the official said. "The agency has the authority to do so, and it is absolutely lawful."

Another government official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said one example of a case in which the letters were used was the 1994 case of CIA officer Aldrich Ames, who eventually was found to have been selling secrets to the Soviet Union.

None of the officials reached by the AP commented about the extent of use by the Defense Department agencies, but the Times said military intelligence officers have sent the letters in up to 500 investigations.

SPAIN SEEKS ARREST OF US SOLDIERS

Jose Couso (brother of Canino of Spanish punk band Sin Dios), 37, died in April 2003 after a US tank fired on a hotel used by foreign journalists in Baghdad. The US has admitted its tank crew fired at the Palestine Hotel but has cleared Sgt Thomas Gibson, Cpt Philip Wolford and Lt-Col Philip De Camp of blame. The soldiers say they thought they were being shot at when they opened fire.

Caught on film

The Palestine Hotel was the base for almost all the foreign media crews in Baghdad during the US-led invasion of Iraq. Mr. Couso was working for Spain's Telecinco television station at the time. Reuters cameraman Taras Portsyuk, a Ukrainian, was also killed in the blast and three other Reuters staff injured.

Footage of the incident on the day before the fall of the regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein—which did not record any fire from the hotel—was witnessed around the world. A US review of the incident ruled that the use of force by the tank was justified, but the family of Mr. Couso decided to press criminal charges through the Spanish courts.

Freeze on assets

In December 2006, Spain's supreme court overturned a previous high court decision and ruled that the Spanish legal system was competent to judge the three US soldiers.'

As he issued the international search-and-capture order for the three tank crew members, Judge Santiago Pedraz demanded that prosecutors also investigate whether it was possible to freeze the soldiers' US assets in case of future compensation claims. The BBC's Danny Wood in Madrid says Spain's justice system is accustomed to taking on controversial international cases.

In 1998, Spain attempted to extradite Chile's former leader, Augusto Pinochet, while he was in London. The British government turned down that request, and the US authorities are very unlikely to co-operate with this latest international arrest warrant issued by a Spanish judge, our correspondent says.

But four years after the death of Mr. Couso, his family have achieved a symbolic victory, he says.

INDIA'S NEW PUBLIC POLICY TREND IS ENRICHING SOME FARMERS AND BOOTING OTHERS OFF THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS.

By Mark Sappenfield and Saurabh Joshi from *The Christian Science Monitor*

Omkar Sharma knows that halfway across India, villagers like himself have sparked rioting in the countryside. Enraged by a government plan to buy farmland for private industry, they have destroyed bridges and blockaded roads outside Calcutta in clashes that have left several people dead.

Yet here, west of Delhi, where Mr. Sharma once worked the parched plains and a large global industry is also gobbling up acres of farmland, there is only quiet contentment. Until a few months back, Sharma's family of twelve had only a broken-down tractor to its name.

Now, after selling their land to one of India's largest companies, every member wants to buy a car—preferably an SUV.

Indians have greeted the country's most controversial economic reform, the Special Economic Zone (SEZ), from two contrary perspectives. Established a year ago as a cure for India's industrial woes—an überindustrial park offering up-to-date infrastructure and tax breaks—the zones have been hailed as economic saviors and denounced as thinly veiled land grabs.

The scene in Pahisaur is evidence that the zones can work, supporters say. But the mounting, sometimes violent, agitation among farmers outside Calcutta is creating momentum for reform.

With 200 zones already approved and hundreds more in the pipeline, economists acknowledge that the process is spiraling beyond its original intent. Moreover, the upheaval from West Bengal to Maharashtra in the east is a reminder that despite India's rising economic profile internationally, it remains a nation of poor farmers who are uneasy about the country's transition away from an agrarian past.

"A right balance has to be struck," says D.K. Joshi, an economist at the Indian credit-ratings firm CRISIL. The balance, so far, has tilted in favor of developers, say critics. When India borrowed the SEZ concept from China last summer, it hoped to stir activity in its lagging industrial sector, offering companies "islands of excellence" amid India's pitted roads, unpredictable electricity supply, and punishing tax laws. The response has surged beyond expectation. In the 27 years since China began its SEZ policy, it has established five such sites. In little more than a year, the state of Maharashtra alone already has approved more than two dozen.

What's more, many of the approvals have been less about industry and more about real estate speculation. According to his figures, only 25 percent of the SEZ approvals have gone toward industrial zones, with the rest for real estate, says Shameem Faizee, secretary of the Communist Party of India.

"It needs to be reversed," he says. The concern is that the zones are taking prime agricultural land and displacing farmers who have worked their land for generations. In India, where some 70 percent of the population still works in the agricultural sector, this is no small matter.

Sonia Gandhi, the head of India's governing party, has already warned developers about building the zones on the country's most arable land. But activists worry that even in less fertile areas, the zones take away the only means of support not only for thousands of farmers, but also for merchants in nearby villages.

"SEZs would only lead to widespread displacement and the loss of livelihood for those who have nowhere else to go and no other way to earn a living," says activist Rajendra Ravi. Pahisaur seems to fit Ms. Ravi's description of provincial Indian village life at its most mundane—a small collection of crumbling brick-and-plaster structures surrounded by cracking and sunbaked dirt extending to every horizon. Water shortages have already forced most farmers around Pahisaur to rent their land to brick-kiln owners. Sharma himself has given up farming, instead commuting to Delhi to pick up odd jobs.

In the face of such destitution, most of Pahisaur's farmers are only too happy to welcome Reliance, a company that has not yet decided what kind of industries it will invite to its SEZ. The company, which is based in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), paid Sharma ten times the value of his land, and he was glad to take it. "This land has been with us since the time of my grandfather, and we could hardly break even cultivating it," he says.

Instead of displacing local villagers, Reliance is starting medical-outreach and primary-education programs in the area. To make sure those who sell their land aren't careless with their money, it has also called in banks to provide investment advice to all of the beneficiaries.

"Now, everything will change," Sharma says. "The entire face of the village will be transformed." The scene in Pahisaur stands in marked contrast to those that have emerged in West Bengal, where the government buys both farmland and entire villages before selling them to businesses. Critics charge that the provincial government is essentially kicking both farmers and landless villagers off their land without proper compensation or rehabilitation.

Recently, one anti-SEZ activist went on a 25-day hunger strike to protest the land policies of the local government. Government needs to get out of the business of acquiring land for zones and let the private partners negotiate among themselves," says economist Mr. Joshi.

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FATHER OF DEAD WEST BANK GIRL SEEKS PEACE WITH ISRAELIS

From an article by Greg Myre, *New York Times*

Even as Bassam Aramin mourns his ten-year-old daughter, killed during a clash between stone-throwing Palestinian youths and the Israeli police, he says he wants to talk to Israelis about making peace. It has been a long journey for Mr. Aramin, 38, a former Palestinian fighter. He spent seven years in Israeli jails, from 1986 to 1993, for weapons possession and for belonging to the Fatah movement, which was banned at the time.

But his views gradually changed, and for the past two years he has been an active member of Combatants for Peace, a group of former Palestinian militants and former Israeli soldiers who have teamed up to urge reconciliation to both sides.

With his Israeli partner, Zohar Shapira, a former member of an elite commando unit, Mr. Aramin has been speaking to students and community groups in Israel and the West Bank.

"Over time I became convinced that we couldn't solve our problem with weapons and we had to talk to the other side," said Mr. Aramin, who lives in Anata, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. "I want to keep talking to Israelis so they can understand what happened to my daughter."

His daughter, Abir, was in an upbeat mood last Tuesday after completing a math exam at the Anata Girls School. She walked out the front gate and crossed the dusty street, where she bought a small gift for her mother, Salwa, who had helped her study.

As Abir emerged from the store, a clash was erupting between stone-throwing Palestinian youths and the Israeli border police. A moment later Abir was hit in the back of the head, a blow that threw her headlong into the street, according to her sister, Areen, 12, who was with her. After three days in Hadassah University Hospital in Jerusalem, Abir died without ever regaining consciousness.

Israel's separation barrier, a towering concrete wall here, is just a few yards from the adjacent boys' and girls' schools, and the area was the scene of frequent confrontations during its construction. But work on the wall was finished several months ago, and the area was calm until the border police began patrolling neighborhoods on the West Bank side of the wall in recent days. Youths threw stones at the Israeli jeeps on several occasions, residents said.

Areen and other Palestinian witnesses say they have no doubt that Abir was hit by Israeli fire. Michael Sfard, a prominent Israeli lawyer representing the Aramin family, said he had received a rubber-coated steel bullet that witnesses said they had found at the scene, which he presented to the Israeli police.

A preliminary report of the autopsy conducted by an Israeli government pathologist and one appointed by the Aramin family found that Abir's head wounds were consistent with the impact of a rubber-coated bullet, though other possibilities could not be ruled out, Mr. Sfard said.

But the Israeli police say the autopsy did rule out the possibility of a rubber-coated bullet. The police say an investigation has found that police officers fired tear gas but has not confirmed the use of such bullets. A police official, speaking on condition of anonymity because the inquiry is continuing, said the police suspected that Abir might have been hit by a rock that one of the Palestinians had thrown toward the police.

The Aramin family adamantly rejects the police theory and is quick to note the strong support they have received from Israelis, particularly those from Mr. Aramin's group. "They were at the hospital with me the entire time," said Mr. Aramin, who works at the Palestinian National Archives in Ramallah. "I received phone calls from tens of Israelis expressing their sympathy for my family and condemning the killing of my daughter."

In a conflict so long and bitter, killings more often prompt calls for revenge rather than understanding. Mr. Aramin said his own outlook had changed slowly, over many years. Like many Palestinian prisoners, he learned to speak Hebrew while in jail and began conversing with prison guards and watching Israeli television. The peace negotiations of the '90s gave him hope, and despite the chronic fighting of the last several years, his work with Combatants for Peace has helped sustain him, he said.

The group has about 300 members, with about half from each side, according to Avichay Sharon, 25, an Israeli who was one of the founders and who spent time at the hospital alongside Mr. Aramin.

"When I heard what happened I rushed to the hospital," Mr. Sharon said. "All of us took it upon ourselves to do what we could. Bassam knows there are a lot of people who love him and care about him." The Israeli members of Combatants for Peace have already served their mandatory military service, though they may be called up for reserve duty that can last for several weeks each year. As an infantry soldier, Mr. Sharon fought in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from 2000 to 2003. He decided he would not do it again as a reservist.

"I wouldn't point to any one incident," said Mr. Sharon, now a student at Hebrew University in philosophy and Jewish studies. "It was an accumulation of events that opened my eyes." As a reservist he works in logistics and does not expect to be sent into Palestinian areas. But other members of Combatants for Peace have refused such orders, and served jail time as a result.

The group has held dozens of meetings in recent months, but finding an audience remains a challenge. "I wouldn't say it's simple," Mr. Sharon said. "Many Israelis don't want a dialogue with someone they think is a terrorist. Palestinians don't want to speak to people they see as occupiers."

Israeli members wanted to pay condolences in Anata, where Mr. Aramin lives with his wife and their five surviving children. But the Aramin family advised against it, fearing that angry neighbors might insult a visiting Israeli, or worse.

Mr. Aramin said he would soon be back at work with his Israeli colleagues. "I want my daughter to be the last victim," he said. "There are partners on the other side who believe what I believe."

PERSISTENT ANARCHIST ATTACKS IN GREECE FORCE NEW POLICE ATTENTION

www.anarchistnews.org

Greek authorities troubled by renewed outbreaks of violence by anarchists in the capital met on Monday to seek ways to end increasingly frequent firebombings and vandalism in the country's two largest cities.

The country's police chief was meeting with the head of the Supreme Court after a prosecutor ordered an investigation into the violence and why police had failed to make any arrests. The discussions came as further attacks were reported in the northern port city of Thessaloniki early Monday, with assailants throwing firebombs at a bank and outside a university building. Nobody was hurt.

Although the firebombings rarely cause injuries, the almost nightly hit-and-run attacks against banks, government offices and other targets come at a time of increased concern over the possible return of domestic terrorism. A little-known group fired a rocket into the US Embassy building about ten days ago in the boldest attack in Greece in years.

Much of the violence has come during or after mass demonstrations against an education reform law, and the police have sometimes been accused of instigating it by heavy-handed tactics.

Police Chief Anastasios Dimoshakis, who met with the head of the Supreme Court and its chief prosecutor, defended the often-criticized role of the police. "The Greek police have no vendetta against the citizens...the police are not part of the problem, they are part of the solution," he said.

He added that last year, some 140 anarchists had been arrested and another 650 detained in Athens and Thessaloniki after violent episodes.

BY 2008: PLANET OF SLUMS?

By Brad Knickerbocker from *The Christian Science Monitor*

For the first time in human history, the world's population is about to become mostly urban. Citing population growth rates and migration patterns, United Nations researchers and other experts predict that some time in 2008 more people will live in cities than in rural areas.

This demographic shift is mostly taking place in Africa and Asia, largely in low-income settlements in developing countries—much of it in the 22 "megacities" whose populations will exceed 10 million and in some cases grow to more than 20 million by 2015.

The environmental, economic, and social ramifications of such trends are enormous, according to the Worldwatch Institute's annual "State of the World" report released Tuesday. Among the major challenges are the mundane features of daily living: clean water and air, sanitary waste facilities, the cost of food, and the availability of shelter and transportation.

"Unplanned and chaotic urbanization is taking a huge toll on human health and the quality of the environment, contributing to social, ecological, and economic instability in many countries," warns the report, which is written by demographers, international program officials, and other experts from the United States and other countries.

But the news is not all bad. Researchers find examples of cities from Karachi, Pakistan to Freetown, Sierra Leone to Bogotá, Colombia with projects aimed at improving the lives of urban dwellers while reducing the environmental impact of concentrated populations. These include urban farming plots, solar water heaters, economic cooperatives, improved sewer facilities, and upgraded transportation systems.

"The task of saving the world's modern cities might seem hopeless—except that it is already happening," says Worldwatch president Christopher Flavin. "Necessities from food to energy are increasingly being produced by urban pioneers inside city limits."

Still, the challenges and the probable costs of addressing them remain daunting. Eight of the ten most populous cities are on or near earthquake faults. Some two-thirds of the cities projected to exceed eight million residents by 2015 are in coastal areas where sea levels may rise as a result of climate change.

But the human need is more immediate. Of the three billion people who live in cities today, about one billion are in slums without clean water, adequate toilet facilities, or durable housing. Some 1.6 million urban dwellers—many if not most of them children—die each year due to causes associated with the lack of clean water and sanitation.

"For a child living in a slum, disease and violence are daily threats, while education and healthcare are often a distant hope," says Molly O'Meara Sheehan, project director of Worldwatch's 2007 report, a collection of articles and graphics produced annually since 1984.

This argues for a reassessment of global development priorities, advocates say, particularly the allocation of national and international aid. According to the Commission for Africa, launched by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2004, problems associated with urbanization are second only to HIV/AIDS on the world's most rapidly urbanizing continent.

Yet from 1970 to 2000, aid designated for cities in developing areas was just 4 percent of total development assistance worldwide. This was the period when many countries in Africa were transitioning politically and economically from European colonialism to independence.

"Too many of us were ill prepared for our urban future," notes Anna Tibaijuka, executive director of UN-HABITAT, the United Nations agency that promotes socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing universal adequate shelter.

"The promise of independence has given way to the harsh realities of urban living," writes Dr. Tibaijuka, an agricultural economist and native of Tanzania, in the report's foreword. By 2015, there are likely to be 59 African cities with populations between one million and five million, 65 such cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 253 in Asia.

"Urban centers are hubs simultaneously of breathtaking artistic innovation and some of the world's most abject and disgraceful poverty," writes Mr. Flavin. "They are the dynamos of the world economy but also the breeding grounds for alienation, religious extremism, and other sources of local and global insecurity."

Cities also exemplify the challenges and promises of sustainability. China, for example, has 16 of the world's most polluted cities. But on an island in the Yangtze River near Shanghai, China this year plans to break ground on the Dongtan ecocity project designed to be nearly self-sufficient in food, water, energy, and waste disposal for its projected 500,000 residents.

THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO PAT ROBERTSON

Patrick Sperry

On January 2nd, the famous televangelist Pat Robertson spoke out on his Christian Broadcasting Network television show, *The 700 Club* that "mass killings" were in store for 2007. "I'm not necessarily saying it's going to be nuclear,"

Robertson made the claim that God had spoken to him at a recent prayer retreat and told him of this, and added, "The Lord didn't say nuclear. But I do believe it will be something like that."

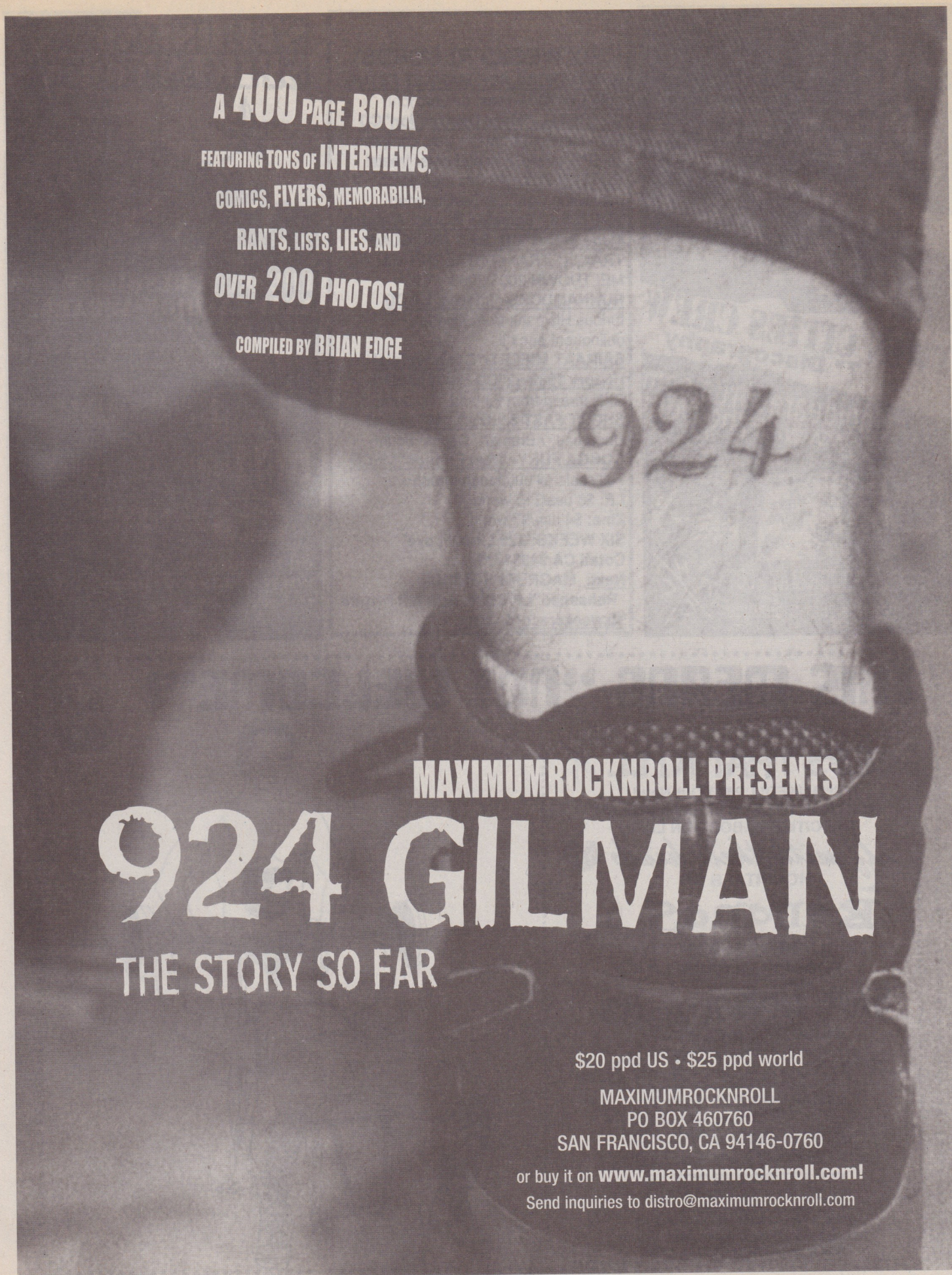
For the past three years, the religious broadcaster has voiced a few other predictions of the future, which haven't exactly lived up to the hype. In 2004 Pat Robertson made public that concerning George W. Bush's campaign in the American Presidential election, "'It's going to be like a blow-out election in 2004..." Time proved this to be false considering George W. Bush only carried a 2.5% popular vote margin over John Kerry.

In the following year, another adumbration that would eventually be proven false by time was told to Robertson supposedly by God. Once again, it was about George W. Bush: "He'll have social security reform passed." The president's social security appeal did not get passed, and was halted.

Also in 2005 the hospitalization of Israel's Prime Minister at the time, Ariel Sharon, was a hot topic on *The 700 Club*. Robertson made the suggestion that the stroke that the Prime Minister had suffered may have been God's punishment to Ariel Sharon for giving more land to the Palestinians. Robertson also voiced that the 1995 assassination of former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin may have been for the same reason.

Another foretelling by Robertson in 2006 heralded that, "There may well be something as bad as a tsunami in the Pacific Northwest." This did not occur; however, there was much heavy flooding and hard rain last spring in New England; Robertson claimed that this partially was what he had predicted.

On the accuracy of his predictions, Robertson has said, "I have a relatively good track record. Sometimes I miss."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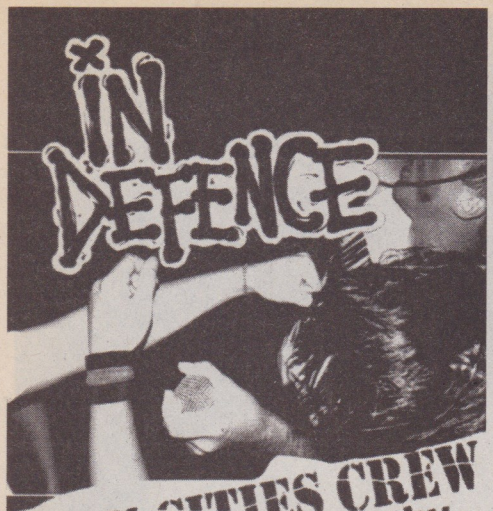

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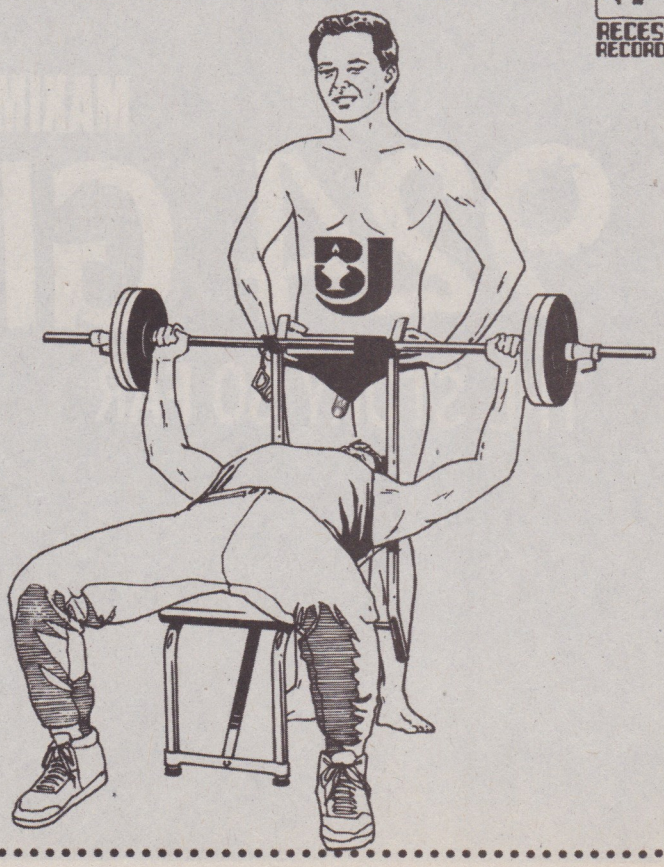

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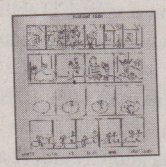
Painted Thin "Small Acts of Love and Rebellion"

John K. Samson "Little Pictures"

Red Fisher "War Wagon"

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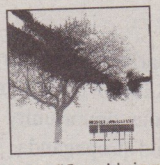
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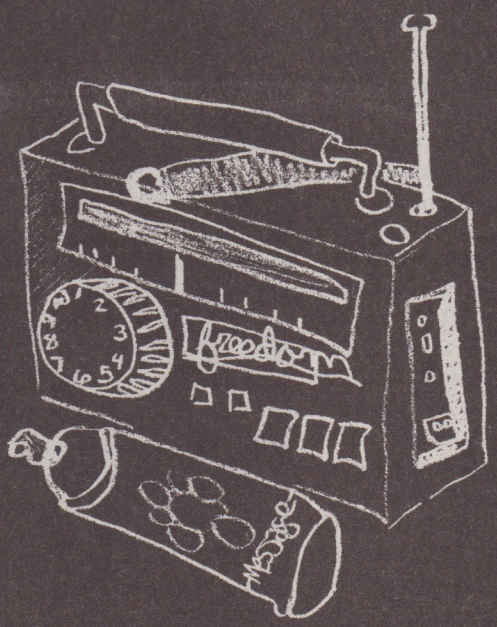

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KRALJEVO, SERBIA SCENE REPORT

Intro:

Hello dear (potential) friends: my name is Felixxx and I will be your guide through the history and development of hardcore, punk, and anarchism in my hometown. Kraljevo is a town in central Serbia with around 100,000 inhabitants. The first exposure of punk to my town was a gig that PEKINSKA PATKA, a punk band from Novi Sad, played here in the late '70s or early '80s. I'm unsure of the date because I was only born in 1983. Unfortunately, I'm the most active person over here during the last few years and I will torture you till the end of this report. So let's see what I can do for you. Let there be darkness!!! XXX

Bands:

After the fall of communism in the early '90s, the first punk bands that formed were in Kraljevo. A lot of these bands had some demos but they never had a serious opportunity to play shows because of Milosevic's terror and propaganda. When I was a kid I saw graffiti of bands called THE MORONS, EMI, PROHIBICIJA (I think that they were a straight edge band) and others. Some of the graffiti is still on walls, such as "Positive Hardcore" on the city museum. PINHEAD is the first band whose graffiti I used to see that I'll mention. They played RAMONES-ish punk and were a really cool band. Unfortunately I have heard their demo only twice. HOCU?NECU!. is another band that is still active but only features the singer, Sicko, from the original lineup. They inspired kids with positive anti-war and anti-nationalistic messages all around ex-Yugoslavia. Their thrashy anarcho hardcore/punk are the anthems of whole generation of punks. They formed in 1991 or 92 and had three albums, *Trulez/Il nas Vuja Mrzi Il Mi Ne Znamo Da Sviramo*, *Srpski San*, and self-titled, and a live album released by a Greece label. TOTALNI PROMASAJ (TOTAL FAILURE) has not played for almost ten years but was a really great band. They released a CD on HG:Fact records from Japan, which featured songs from the *Use Your Head* and *Konstruktivna Borba* tapes. They also had a split 7" with the Croatian crust band BAD JUSTICE on Humanita Nova Records, based out of Croatia. HG:Fact (Japan) supported bands from Kraljevo during the mid-'90s, just check the *No Fate* series. TOTAL FAILURE played UK hardcore in the vein of RIPCORD. They were the first band to play abroad after years of isolation because of wars and Milosevic's politics. (They toured Slovenia during the fall of '96.) MORTUUS, another band, was a great grindcore band that had a lot of cool demos but only released one album during the mid-'90s, *Electro Educating Shock*. SEDATIV formed during the early '90s and played melodic hardcore. They had three demos released on one tape. SMUDOS was a really cool punk rock band with a rock 'n' roll feel and released only one tape posthumously, *Komsija Boli Me Kurac*. PUNISHED is still active and very DIY, having released five albums on their own: *Powerful, End, Influence Exerted Effects, Toward The Individualism*, and *Like Blazes At Full Blast*. They play metalcore and they are the best band from Kraljevo ever. They play all around Serbia in clubs and big stages at festivals. This generation of bands quit during the war in 1999 except PUNISHED and HOCU?NECU!. There were only a few bands in the next generation of bands. REVOLT recorded a demo in the fall of 1998 and played their thrashcore style till 2001. After that they changed to a more commercial hardcore sound and quit after two years. During that period there was a great crisis in the hardcore and punk scene. Only two bands during that time formed. They were OPD (crossover hardcore) and NO CHOICE! (melodic punk rock). OPD had one demo, which was released on a split CD with THE TRUTH OF XXX on Mamma Records. OPD was my first band and we had a lot of gigs around Serbia. We played with bands such as AK47, SEVERED HEAD OF STATE, and others. NO CHOICE! formed in the mid '90s but became really good in 2002. NC! has two demos, the first of which was released in Belarus and Croatia (La Bean Records) on tape. In 2001 Kraljevo had only one new band and it was ANGER

HOCU? NECU!

TRUTH OF XXX

PROJECT. They played metallic-influenced hardcore. After one year they broke up and the members formed two different bands LIFELESS and SKIPPED. After the last OPD show we decided to form a new band. During the spring of 2003 THE TRUTH OF XXX was formed. We play straightforward hardcore-punk and have three demos recorded. Songs from the first and second demo were released on a split CD with OPD on Mamma Records, and songs from the third demo will be released on a few international compilations. I need to mention that we are contributing to the *Tribute to Youth Of Today* on Embrace records from Malaysia. The most recently formed band in Kraljevo is POSLEDNJI DAN SEPTEMBRA (LAST DAY OF SEPTEMBER). They play nice emo-core with lyrics about politics and love, of course. Really nice band. I just hope that they will record a demo soon. I think that's about it for all of the bands worth mentioning.

Contacts:
PUNISHED: www.punishedband.com
HOCU?NECU!: tintilini@ptt.yu
NO CHOICE!: nochoice@ptt.yu
THE TRUTH OF XXX: brotherhood@ptt.yu
or www.myspace.com/thetruthofxxx
POSLEDNJI DAN SEPTEMBRA: positiveyouth@tron-inter.net

Zines:

In the mid-'90s Kraljevo had a strong scene with at least five great zines. Worth mentioning are *Podzemlje Dosade*, *Reborn* (four issues), and *Kontrapunkt* (six issues). During the last few years only Gaca of NO CHOICE!, did her own zine called *Akupunktura*. She started in the mid-'90s and is still doing it. Pretty cool zine (fourteen issues). I used to do *Jedan Po Jedan* (four issues) but I quit to work on *Ex-Yu Straight Edge Bulletin* (two issues) and *Last Breath* (two issues).

Contacts:
Akupunktura: nochoice@ptt.yu
Ex-Yu Straight Edge Bulletin & Last Breath: brotherhood@ptt.yu
Visit *Last Breath* web site: www.geocities.com/lastbreathzine

Organizations:

During the last ten years many NGOs formed in Kraljevo to raise money for themselves, and screw-up the youth and betray our interests. The only cool organizations where anarcho or just nice and cool people are involved are *Kvart* and *Positive Youth*. *Kvart* organizes a big gig for local bands in the main town-square every summer. It is the only chance for young people to show something different in this fucking town. We live like slaves in our own town, trust me. *Kvart* is also active in education about refugees, rights of minorities, homophobia, and AIDS. *Positive Youth* is an organization that I take an active part in. We are working on organizing gigs for foreign bands, and doing education evenings about racism and homophobia related issues. We lead a strong anti-drug campaign and also have a crew that spreads messages about GNU-Linux and free software philosophy. We do everything we can to show that world without fear, borders and weapons is not impossible to create.

Contacts:
Positive Youth: mgrbic@ptt.yu
Kvart: friend@ptt.yu
Visit Free Software Network web site: www.fsn.org.yu

Clubs:

It is sad but true, there is no club for organizing gigs or gatherings! Hard to believe but yes it is true. Every year we visit local authorities and ask for permission to use old and ruined buildings but they don't let us. They said that there will always be larger problems than education or letting people have fun. I should mention two cool clubs. One from the early '90s "Baron" and another from the beginning of 2000 called "Opposite." They were cool places with tolerant owners. We're always trying but it's hard when there is no infrastructure.

Labels/Distros:

There are no active labels right now. The only label from Kraljevo was Kontrapunkt. The only two distros were Kontrapunkt and Jedan Po Jedan but both of them have been out of commission for a few years.

Outro:

That's all folks. I wish there was more to write about, but as you can see most things are on the decline. For more information write to me directly. Take care and stay tuned. —Felixxx

Aleksandar Teofilovic/Cara Dusana
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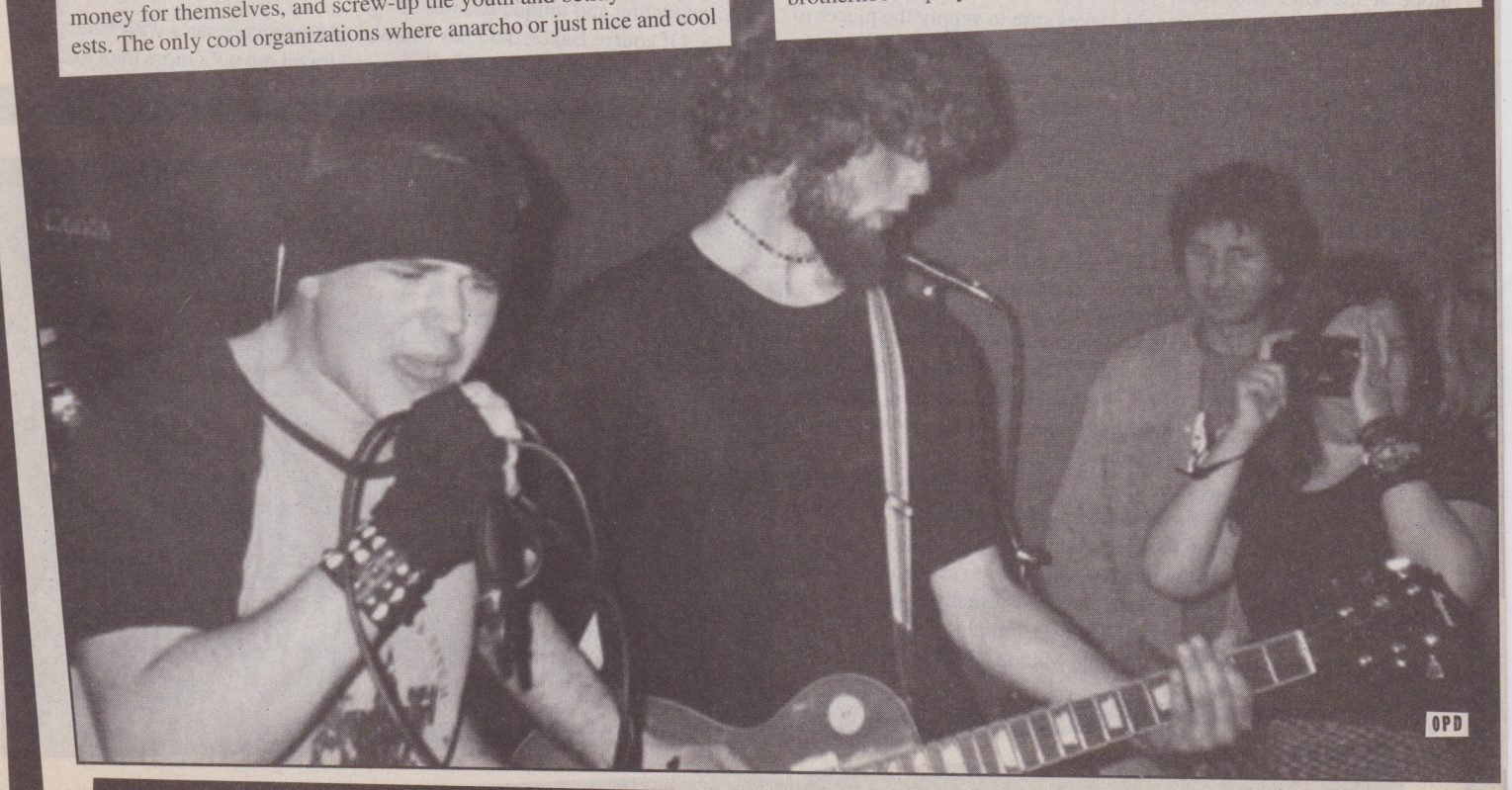
Kraljevo/Serbia
brotherhood@ptt.yu



BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

Bakersfield is a pretty fucked up place. Priding itself in hometown legends like Korn, Buck Owens, (and respectively) Merle Haggard; oakies, rednecks, and scumbags rule the streets of Bakersfield. But in the midst of trash, a punk scene has been flowing for many years. Hiding in the shadows of the Los Angeles and San Francisco scenes, bands since the late '70s have been erupting from this vile place. And even though most people look past this "diseased-infested-shithole" town, they are missing out on one of the most unique and thriving scenes around.

Record Stores:

The record stores in Bakersfield are kind of far and in between. Like most cities, we have a collection of stores with over-priced and used Blue Öyster Cult albums. The kind of stores where the ripped and drawn on AC/DC covers are $10 and up, and every Jimi Hendrix album is "rare." Also, with our own unique type of junkies, instead of cashing in on old punk vinyl from the decaying waste, a person will generally pull out Peter Frampton albums with heroin needles and meth pipes. But within the collection of dirty classic rock stores, Going Underground Records supplies the city with punk vinyl, clothing, and *MRR*. Owner Ronald Ramirez has been self-employed for almost six years and has been the backbone of the scene in Bakersfield.

Going Underground Records, also a record label, keeps a consistent flow of punk, garage, and independent music from all around the globe at the kid's fingertips. The only punk record store with fair prices and quality records, Ronald makes sure to supply the pieces of shit in Bakersfield their monthly *MRR* and handful of records. Knowing 90 percent of his customers, Ronald is quick to pick out individual stacks for his routine imbeciles and is usually the first record store to order directly from the labels instead of some sloppy-seconds distribution center. Maintaining and staying true to his DIY ethics, Ronald chooses a life of poverty for something he feels passionately about.

Venues:

Of course there are handfuls of shitty, bootleg, and generic bands that infiltrate the local music scene. Nü-metal rip offs, and yesterday's new-wave trend (because Bakersfield is generally a few phases behind the normal fad) swallow the majority of venues. But house shows, the boiler room, and the famous Munoz Boxing Gym, Bakersfield has its share of credible venues.

The Munoz Gym has been the stomping ground for eight years. Also owned by Ronald, this local landmark is a boxing facility during the day and a venue during the night. Bands playing in the ring, which is only 12 inches from the foundation, viewers can get inside the ropes with the band while watching them play. Kids usually always show up to shows and buy plenty of merchandise. Jumping from the rafters, ropes, and benches outside of the ring, Munoz Gym can be one of the rowdiest places to play. And since Bakersfield punks are a little off from the majority of the world, 98% of bands are creped out and/or have negative feelings about the humor and mentality Bakersfield embraces. This is what happens when a band plays Bakersfield. A persons mind is forced to expand. It's almost surreal and definitely more intriguing talking with a Bako punk compared to the average typical rich/Betty-Crocker-punk-rocker in bigger cities.

Another popular venue is the Boiler room. Owned by a church and run by Bobby from Loser Life's father, this is a big basement that has more of a variety of bands coming through. With a professional sound system, and a huge stage, a band can choose whether or not they would like to play on the ground or on the mountain. This venue usually costs some money to rent, but in the end it's a good resource to invest in. And if these both fail, many kids are more than willing to share their living room with touring bands. House shows are pretty frequent around here and generally become the gnarliest.

Bands:

Since the scene in Bakersfield is not as big as more populated cities, and the closest town with any sort of similar DIY ethics is at least 100 miles south, musicians are pretty hard to come by. And of course with the local influences like Adema, Korn, and whatever was last months craze, bands slam out some mediocre and horrible tunes. But recently, different musicians have been coming afloat from the leeward sides of the San Joaquin Valley. And with a strong label backing these bands, Bakersfield has been able to contribute some innovating and unique sounds.

Of course Bakersfield has had one or two occurrences with bands leaving the smoggy and heated city, and travel out with more than just

a CD-r; older bands like SHARAZAD and THE PINE to be more specific have toured the country and even parts of Europe. But until a few years ago, bands like NEON NAZIS, HIPS, LOSER LIFE, and THE CONTAMINATORS have come full throttle. Most of the Bako bands living life on a thin line of controversy (ex: having "nazi" in your band name) have at least 50 kids show up to their shows! And this may not seem like a lot to most, but having an overwhelming support of kids of all different genres to come out to a show is very flattering and inspiring.

NEON NAZIS are comprised of two Latinos, an African American front man, and sometimes an Anglo-Saxon drummer; the name stands elaborated on first sight. NEON NAZIS get compared to older garage sounding punk and usually never play shows. THE CONTAMINATORS, compiling of the two main men in NEON NAZIS play more *Killed By Death* styled punk. Both bands are similar but have unique traits from each other. HIPS has the same feeling as both NEON NAZIS and CONTAMINATORS, but are a little sloppier, which is by no means a bad thing. Hips have now broken up and three-quarters of the band now play in SABOTEURS, which is a more mature sounding HIPS and is definitely worth checking out. And finally LOSER LIFE embraces the Chicago-esque sounding bands like PEGBOY and ARTICLES OF FAITH with touch of HÜSKER DÜ. And yes, these are not the only bands around in Bakersfield, but these are the bands that venture out into the unknown lands of "liberal ideas" and cities that are not run by bigot republicans and money hungry libertarians.

LOSER LIFE played a house show with GIANT HAYSTACKS in Bakersfield, and of course none of the gutter punk kids really knew who GIANT HAYSTACKS was (remember, we're behind the times) and came to the show with no money and lots of beer. This being half of the crowd while the other was made up of skaters, scenesters, bootleggers, and three little kids who wore Zakk Wylde patches and Insane Clown Posse T-shirts. None of which really brought money because of the quick assumption that it was a house show, which meant a party, not a show. Regardless, scrounging up 50+ dollars and having stoned, drunk, and fucked on life 17 year olds passing out while HAYSTACKS played, this show was a perfect example of the diversity and unity that Bakersfield can possess. Seeing all types of kids jump around on each other, mouth lyrics to GIANT HAYSTACKS and LOSER LIFE (even though LOSER LIFE didn't have lyrics to some of the songs yet!) was pretty radical. Especially when guys wearing CHAOS UK patches compared HAYSTACKS to RANCID and early BAD RELIGION. We're a little slow, but you have to admire the innocence.

NEON NAZIS

NEON NAZIS

LOSER LIFE

Conclusion:

Oil fields, farmlands, and commercial buildings are the only aesthetic pleasure Bakersfield delivers and might as well be located in butt-fucked Egypt. This city, which has been built on country music, Christian ideals, and having the last western outlaw ever shot, the chances of this being a place for a punk band to play seems pretty futile. But amongst all this bullshit is a thriving scene that cares only about music. Not following some orthodox outline to try and fit into some classical ideal of punk, Bakersfield kids are who they are, which is real and genuine people. And instead of following internet punk trends and new wave bands, Bakersfield punks are one of the only scenes where instead of downloading a bands album on Napster to see if they sound "good," they will tape trade and even buy a 7" they have never heard! This is Bakersfield, so if a band expects a draw off of their internet mp3s alone, they have fooled themselves. Bakersfield still lives on dial-up and 4.0 AOL systems. But usually no matter what band comes to town, if it is a punk band, kids will come out to watch. And of course Bakersfield isn't a city you would want to skip L.A. or San Francisco for, but it is definitely a city that I would encourage all bands on tour to experience. We're not just a meth infested hick town, we're products of our environment that is plagued with negative shit all around us. But we're able to make something out of nothing and work our hardest to make it great. We're all a little fucked here. Maybe it's in the water, air, or the inbreeding. But regardless, that's what makes us so unique and one of the most interesting scenes around today.

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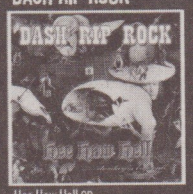

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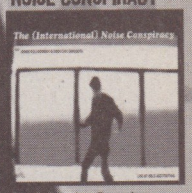

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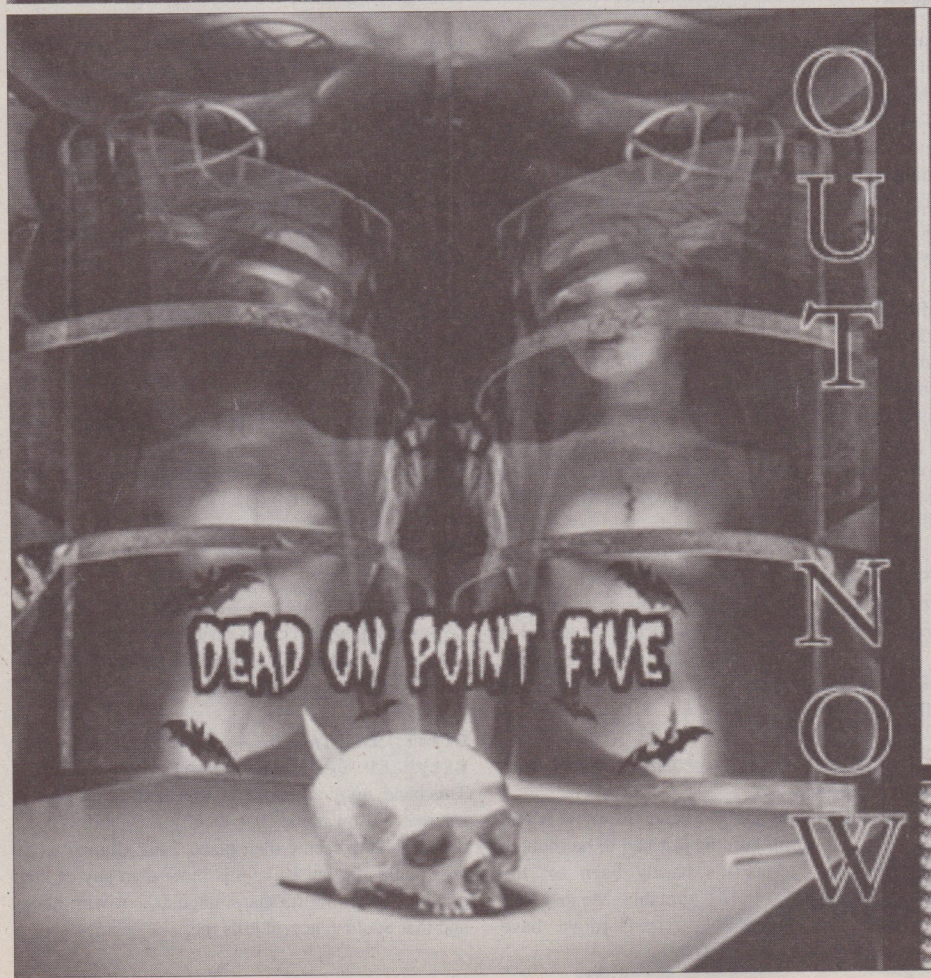

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Vagotonia Records

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL PRESENTS 2006: THE YEAR IN RECORDS

Another year left to the dustbins of history, and we here at Maximum Rocknroll Fanzine are here to collect (and critique) our collective output and ephemera.
(Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Learned to Love the Top Ten List...)

TIM BROOKS

As with the past couple of years there aren't as many absolutely classic punk records being made but that could be that I'm an old jaded fucker, but so be it. That being said the best is as good as anything I've heard, there's still people out there making fresh and exciting punk music, and for that I am thankful. I bet I've missed something, but off the top of me head, in no order...

Top Ten Records

MARKED MEN - "Fix My Brain" LP (Swami)
This band can do no wrong: possibly the best live band doing the rounds and just mind-blowing on record. Not quite as immediate as the last record, but it grows like a cancer and has become an all time fave. My 50-year-old uncle said they were the best thing he's heard since he first heard Led Zeppelin when he was twelve.

JAY REATARD - "Blood Visions" LP (In the Red)
Yeah, I loved the REATARDS like everyone else and have kept at least a passing eye on the million other side projects that are all pretty ripping (see last year's top ten), but this? The best yet. It has the wild blown out madness of the REATARDS but with the dark control of the ADVERTS (he knocks out an amazing ADVERTS cover on here), pretty broad ranging in sounds but a cohesive listen, definitely up there as one of the "if you only bought one record this year..." candidates.

GOVERNMENT WARNING - "No Moderation" LP (Feral Ward)
The Y2K thrash revival boat sailed a while back for me, and I don't have much time for the army of faceless bands trying their hardest to recreate the first LIFE'S HALT record. Of recent times there are a bunch of really great bands aping sounds from the early '80s but adding their own twist and flavor (CAREER SUICIDE, DIRECT CONTROL, etc), but these kids are easily the best of the lot. Total Boston '82 worship, sounding like JERRY'S KIDS outtakes. Boss.

CARBONAS - "Cold Waste" LP (Raw Deluxe)
I am loathe to put this here, especially after our very own Mitch Tardwell put it out and then wouldn't stop crowing about how it was one of the best records of the year. Alright, fuck you Mitch, this record *smokes*. Like a mix of the fucked up craziness of the REATARDS and the hooks of the MARKED MEN. Killed it live too.

FUCKED UP - "Hidden World" 2xLP (Deranged)
I know, I know... yet another FUCKED UP record in the top ten. No one expected this record, a double fucking LP? They pull it off though. Devastating stuff.

TOUCH OF HYSTERIA - "1983 Demo" 12" (Demo Tapes)
I never usually put old bands in my year end best of, but this just had to be in there as it's hardly been off the turntable. Me and Carl Cordova have been talking for the past year (since this demo turned up on the internet) about why this masterpiece hadn't seen a vinyl re-ish, then Big Sean did the deed. Totally obscure early '80s anarcho punk that only came out as a demo, as good if not better than ZOUNDS, THE MOB, and OMEGA TRIBE, who are three of my all-time favorite bands. This record could easily make my top ten of the past three decades.

CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
BLITZ. Say no more.

FRUSTRATION - "Full of Sorrow" 12" (Born Bad)
Dark, tribal JOY DIVISION driven goth punk from France. Really, really good.

TRANZMITORS - "Some Girls" EP (La-Ti-Da)
Both 7"s I heard this year were great. Totally authentic powerpop, which could easily have been from '79, if it wasn't for the added bite in the guitars. Tough shit to pull off, especially this well.

GIANT HAYSTACKS - "Rebirth of Our City" EP (Pizza! Pizza!)
This band are good mates, so they could easily get in for that reason alone, but luckily they threw out a decent tune to secure their place. I dig all their weird post punk shit, but I like this more than any of their previous stuff. Short, sharp, angular, but with hooks and that Scottish accent kills me.

RAMSEY KANAAN

Top Ten Records

1. THE FALCON - "Unicornography" CD (Red Scare)
Well, in no particular order, save this first one, which is definitely numero uno. What a great record. Couple of dudes from LAWRENCE ARMS and ALKALINE TRIO (two pretty good bands in themselves) really produce much more than a sum of the (rather fine) parts. This disc (CDs are discs too, right!?) has been welded into the CD player since I got it for review a couple of months ago. Pure genius. Scrappy, yet well oiled, in that JAWBREAKER meets OPERATION IVY meets EMBRACE sort of way. Emo in the way that early HÜSKER DÜ was emo. And intense. You had no real idea of what they were singing about, but whatever it is, it made it sound joyous, and serious, and meaningful, all at once. This is the record LEFTOVER CRACK wish they could've done. Fuck me, this is so fucking good. And it's not even a reissue! Unlike...

2. VARIOUS ARTISTS - "Anti-Capitalism" CD (Overground)
The last of the quartet of this utterly essential early '80s UK anarcho-punk retrospective. Really, anyone/everyone interested in punk, politics, and/or protest really has to invest in all four. Lots of big names—CRASS, CONFLICT, RUDIMENTARY PENI—but the joy in this incredibly thorough package is the bringing to light of the more obscure—THE COMMITTEE, ANARKA & POPPY, et al—many of whom never made it beyond the (then) obligatory demo tape. DANBERT NOBACON, sometime lead singer of CHUMBAWAMBA is on this one, but not on...

3. CHUMBAWAMBA - "A Singsong and A Scrap" CD (AK Press Audio)
Yup, I know this was on me last year's top ten (its Euro version), and I know I was instrumental in releasing it, but (duh), it's 'cos its really good! It's almost acoustic/folk, though unlike AGAINST ME!, it's angry, poised, polished, and accomplished, and not on a major label. Stripped down to a four-piece (the four with really good voices!), this is CHUMBAWAMBA's best record. Period. CHUMBAWAMBA are almost as old as...

4. DOA - "Bloodied But Unbound" CD (Sudden Death)
This collects the best bits of their first two LPs and sundry EPs, from their glory years (1978-'83), and is undoubtedly the greatest hits of one of the greatest punk/hardcore bands ever. Absolutely mandatory, essential etc etc. This new edition (about time) is, unfortunately, a couple of tracks short from the original, but it's still the best. Along with...

5. NOFX - "Wolves in Wolves Clothing" CD and "Never Trust A Hippy" CDEP (Fat Wreck Chords)
Lucky me. Lucky you. *Two* releases from undoubtedly the best band in America. Their best musically, and most overtly political since *White Trash...* and *Punk In Drublic*. The EP has four tracks not on said LP, which make it more than essential. Like a fine wine (wait, I don't drink), or a good cheese (fuck, I'm vegan)... anyways, these chaps just get better with age. What a band...

6. CAPTAIN OI!
Ok, I have to concede, Captain Oi! is not a band (though if they were, they'd be the best band in Britain, bar none). It's not a record too. But it is the best label in the world. Easy. 'Cos they re-release pretty much anything that was any good (and some crap), that came out of the UK (and occasionally elsewhere) in the late '70s/'80s. This year, they had the good sense, for example, to release the three majestic power pop LPs by THE MOTORS, 999's first LP, Slaughter And The Dogs' first LP, THE RUTS' singles collection, the BOYS' first LP, COCK SPARRER early demos... I could go on and on. All of these (re)releases should be in the top ten, so I had to cheat a bit and squeeze 'em in this way. Thanks Captain, and keep 'em coming...They don't have an exclusive, of course, on the good re-releases. Overground does a rather fine job of it too, not least...

7. ICON A.D. - "...Lest We Forget" CD (Overground)
And how criminally ICON A.D. were forgotten, and overlooked, till now. Yet another truly wonderful female-fronted, melodic (think SUBHUMANS) early-'80s UK anarcho-punk band, brought back to life with their complete discography, demo tracks, and more. Talking of the SUBHUMANS, of the Canadian variety...

8. SUBHUMANS - "New Dark Age Parade" CD (Alternative Tentacles)
The Canadian SUBHUMANS (remember "Fuck You," "Firing Squad" et al)—well, 3/4 of 'em— got back together. And did a new LP. And it's really good! A rarity, for sure, for reformers. Canadians that tragically haven't reformed yet, but ought to...

9. POINTED STICKS - "Waiting For The Real Thing" CD (Sudden Death)
This is the second collection that Sudden Death has deemed fit (thankfully) to resurrect. The POINTED STICKS were one of the finest new wave/power pop bands to, well, exist, really. They were around in the late-'70s/early-'80s, so you know they were good. Really good. Get both of the reissues, and you'll have 'em all. Don't believe me, check out the POINTED STICKS cover on...

10. METHADONES - "Power Pop Riot" CD (Red Scare)
One of the greatest punk pop bands of all times does justice to some of the greatest power pop tunes of all times... classics from the JAGS, POINTED STICKS and lots more.

11. DEAD TO ME - "Cuban Ballerina" CD (Fat Wreck Chords)
Bloody hell. Another new band in me top ten (well, top eleven). What can be going on? This disc is really going on, fortunately. Melodic punk/pop with an edge. Like the ADOLESCENTS.

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

Top Ten Records

KIELTOLAKI - "Maailma Menee Helvettiin" EP (Moo Cow)
Fuck me, KIELTOLAKI!!!! You are my new faves of Finland. This three-song EP just fucking wrecks my neck muscles; it has the speed and intensity of any old Finnish band. I absolutely love this record. I reviewed it the first time around and I already knew it made my top ten for 2006. Awesome!!

DEEP SLEEP - "You're Screwed" EP (Grave Mistake)
Driving punk shit here with great guitar parts and a snottiness that elevates this record above so many others. Memorable stuff.

JAY REATARD - "Blood Visions" LP (In the Red)
This fucking record!!! I must say I took a look and responded in such a biased manner, thinking, "Fuck this hipster garage rock shit!" Well, fuck I was so stupid and wrong. This record is *punk*!!! I was blown away with something reminiscent of the ADVERTS with a contemporary twist. Too many memorable songs with a dark slant to them make this spinner a repeat listen, not to mention one of my recent favorite records.

CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
Oh my!!!! I heard a test of this before it was out and was blown away. This band even made it to the back of my denim vest. It has the best elements of BLITZ—solid, buzzing Oi!/punk with so many hooks and dark melodies that work to make this a great, great record.

V/A - "Public Safety" LP (MRR)
We did this record and I've heard it so many times but I still play it and feel that it is great! The line-up demonstrates the power of punk now; its release dismantles the bullshit spewed by idiots trying to say punk died in that shit film *American Hardcore*. We are not dead and *Public Safety* is just one of thousands of releases that prove that punk still rules!

CHRONIC SEIZURE - "Brain Sick" EP (Fashionable Idiots)
Snotty and fucked hardcore stuff! Live and on disc this band just fucking kills. Both EPs are great! The first song on side B has an early CRUCIFIX riff going on; it is just sick. On that note, watching the singer fucking hurl some nasty white shit after a set put that special touch on how I already felt about CHRONIC SEIZURE.

RAT TRAPS - "New Flesh" EP (Shattered)
Lo-fi fuzzy punk here with killer female vocals on track one won me over. This has a great bass sound and the overall quality of the recording is filthy; I feel the production (or lack of) is what made this record find its way to one of my faves.

SEX VID - "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
Audio damage coming in from Seattle. This is so frantic and chaotic I just drop to my knees and open up wide for good old nasty sounding HC/punk. SEX VID rules!!

THE HELL - "Typical Shit" EP (Pink Pentagram)
Most are wondering "Who the hell is THE HELL?" This is the equivalent of one of those obscure Virginia bands from '83 that gets rediscovered by the collectors and everyone is shitting themselves over it. THE HELL is from Alabama and give me touches of DIE KREÜZEN or CODE OF HONOR in some way but not just that, and I hate trying to flatter bands by comparing them to older shit. There are really well written songs here that have some great vocals that sound like they are coming from the heart. Very good!

GORILLA ANGREB - "Bedre Tider" LP (Kick 'n' Punch)
Stripped-down punk with female/male harmonies... Very catchy songwriting—much stronger than that one banana single they did that sounded like boring rock—this comes back to punk and takes the risks that many contemporary bands are too afraid to take. You know that feeling of not wanting to look dumb for being the only person dancing at a show? Well, GORILLA ANGREB made me feel like I did not care.

Additional Guests

FEROCIOUS X - "Befria Fran-Vanda" EP (Overthrow)
Blurred-out Japanese noise punk like a sped-up GAI. I could take an EP of this and love it. A whole LP may bore me, but this record is extreme on the ears and I can't help but flashback to the crowd at a GLOOM show in Osaka—fists were up and the punks were charged!!! Killer.

MARGARET THRASHER - "Are You There God?" EP (Clarence Thomas)
Minimal three-chord punk. These girls and one boy give us smart punk rock that pulls influences from the early LA scene. Lyrics are about stupid shit we all deal with in "The Scene." The sincerity of this record and its delivery got me hooked.

OTAN - "El Indomable" EP(Mindless Mutant)
"Corre!" This track alone made this record a winner. It is Spanish punk with urgency and power. I think PANADERIA BOLLERIA NUESTRA SENORA DEL CARMEN when I hear "Corre"!!! OK, an obscure reference that only the international HC elite know about but you should too, try to look this shit up!

OUTRAGED - "No Somos Igual" EP (Lengua Armada)
I put this out, so I feel like I am cheating, but this band just fucking kills!!!!

Reissue Stuff That Rocks

THE FIX - "At the Speed of Twisted Thought" LP (Touch & Go)
INVASORES - "El Ejecutivo" EP (Lengua Armada)
A TOUCH OF HYSTERIA - "1983 Demo" 12" (Demo Tapes)
TOREROS AFTER OLÉ - "Porom Pom Pero" 2xEP (Munster)
ZERO BOYS - "Vicious Circle" LP (Rifleman)
DEEP WOUND - LP (Damaged Goods)
HONOR ROLE - "1982 Demo" 7" (No Way)
KORO - "700 Club" EP (Sorry State)
DICKS - "Hog" EP (Delta Pop)
MODERAT LIKVIDATION - all EPs (Havoc)

LAYLA GIBBON

Top Ten Records

1. MIKA MIKO - "CYSLABF" LP (PPM)
As well as playing one of best shows I saw this year, MIKA MIKO stepped it up with what was easily my favorite record of the year. I liked their earlier stuff (i.e. the 7") alright, but nothing quite sounded like they do live, the total bratty annihilation of a basement show when the world is gonna collapse around you but fuck it, you have to dance. This record totally hits the spot in the best way, it sounds like my record collection with added dislocated energy. I mean it's hard to write about this band just because I have written so much about them already, but really if you like Keith Morris or Dez era BLACK FLAG and also like ESSENTIAL LOGIC or KLEENEX then you need this LP. The guitar tone is perfect Ginn and the vocals will take you out like Tobi Vail at her most venomous. Malice and Discontent, fuckers!

2. GORILLA ANGREB - "Bedre Tidre" 12" (Kick 'n' Punch)
I know everyone was worried about this record ("everyone" meaning my friends, uh, yeah) because of the *Supersyn/Long Island* 7", which I really liked, but it definitely left some confused and disconcerted after the straight up raging-ness of the first few 7"s. This record, however, easily shut mouths and blew minds in the most appropriate way. Total Dangerhouse records destruktion. Like a less rockabilly influenced X, this is old L.A. style punk with the dreamiest punk girl vocals totally in the tradition of Exene/Penelope of AVENGERS/Teresa Covarrubias of THE BRAT... I have no idea what the songs are about because I can't speak Danish, but they sound suitably desperate and dangerous. Totally essential.

3. SEX VID - "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
Probably one of the best bands I saw play this year, at a killer house show, in the city not the suburbs, where no bands sucked and the cops came when I was getting post-show pizza five blocks away. After a year or so of Keith Morris carbon copies it's so refreshing to hear a hardcore record that references DIE KREUZEN, NEOS, KORO, VOID, just the best in brain-mutating doom-embracing hardcore. This is fucking vengeance and fear, not generic Reagan-core. It sounds like the music people would make after someone explained to them what *My War* sounded like, having never heard it for themselves. It's biting and apocalyptic and good music to listen to on yr Walkman walking around town, disconnected. Music for the children of 'Nam Vets. I think the 7" is the perfect form for hardcore music and this is a pretty perfect 7".

4. OUT WITH A BANG - "I'm Against It" 12" (Proud to Be Idiot/Vida Loca)
A one sided 12" rather than a 7"? I sent off for this as soon as I heard it for the first time, from Italy b/c no douchebags were carrying it in the US when I wanted it. By the time I got the record, two months after I sent off for it (I think it cost me like 20 dollars too!) it was totally destroyed; whoever mailed it to me apparently didn't realize you need to actually put packaging material around records as they tend to break when mailed. *At any rate,* the above anecdote just illustrates what I went through to get a hold of this stupid disc. I am not the type to send mass amounts of money to get records unless they are instant classics of the highest order, and *I'm Against It* clearly is, uh, of this high order. It's actually maybe the opposite kind of hardcore to SEX VID, totally bratty and obnoxious rather than scary and deformed. It's juvenile and catchy and demented and not full of its own self-importance. The record that is. I'm into it. Rat music for rat people or something. Insert your own more appropriate references here. *(Now available as a 7" from Fashionable Idiots Records in the USA–Ed)*

5. CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
I actually still don't own this, mostly because pretty much every time I went to Maximum this year it was playing on the record player. Makes me think about how my mum told me that she didn't buy Motown records in the '60s because they were played so much on the radio she didn't need to. Not that that has anything to do with the mighty CRIM DAM. A certain former coordinator whose name begins with P told me that he only had time for one comedy Oi! band and that was HARD SKIN, which I think is totally bogus. Not to engage the wrath of the Souf London massive/enrage the boozers of Gypsy Hill or anything, but I think CRIM DAM is in a totally different league to HARD SKIN. Firstly, they are not a comedy Oi! band. I detect a genuine love for BLITZ, not that HARD SKIN doesn't demonstrate a similar, uh, affection for said band. I just mean CRIMINAL DAMAGE is not an intentional pastiche or a joke, the record clearly is not meant as a parody. The lyrics are about fighting the good fight and the music is suitably powerful and anthemic. It's feel good music for non-boneheads.

6. PELIGRO SOCIAL/BORN DEAD- split EP (Tankcrimes)
PELIGRO SOCIAL was about my favorite local band to see play this year, totally fucking great catchy street punk that references RIP rather than the CASUALTIES. The songs on this split 7", which are also on their rather over produced LP, are the best of a raging bunch. The vocals veer into HR of BAD BRAINS territory in the best way; the music is just right balance between chaos and catchiness. I am not sure if their recorded output captures how rad they are live, and sometimes they are too fucked up to play, which is typical street punk style I guess? But along with LOOK BACK & LAUGH, PELIGRO SOCIAL has been added to my list of local bands I go see whenever they play because of the possibility for greatness. This 7" is great, and I hope they release something that matches the ferocity of seeing them play at Balazo with the kids in the audience that look like they crawled out of the frames of the first *Decline...* movie.

7. BUSY SIGNALS - "Can't Feel a Thing/All the Time" (Shit Sandwich)
I know I overuse the word catchy, but this record pretty much defines the term. A perfect 7". I was going through all the year's *MRR*s just to figure out what records actually came out this year (my old lady brain can't be expected to hold such date sensitive info) and Golnar informed me that she was doing a top ten EPs and a top ten LPs. My aforementioned old lady brain jolted in horror. That sounded like *way too much work*. But looking over the year's releases it would actually have been pretty easy to do, so many good 7"s came out especially in this, uh, genre or whatever you want to call it. I mean I could easily have selected COCOCOMA or the BLACK LIPS or CARBONAS or... This record won over my tired, overwrought brain because it's so fucking catchy and defined why the 7" is and will always be a perfect format for music that does not require triple concept gatefold LP execution, i.e. good music. It's extremely effective dance floor filler music; people have came over when I have DJ'd with this and grabbed the cover out of my hands. *And* I used to DJ at a boring norm hipster doom bar where people's idea of music had clearly rotted their brains out. Whatever. Busy Signals will make your party less boring and your brain less arid.

7. ÜÜÏŸ BÅAÎO◎H◎I◎ - "War Madness" EP (??)
This is kind of an annoying record because it's so good and yet so obviously some kind of internerd hipster message board put-on. It's like the perfect union of old Finnish hardcore, '80s Japanese noise, and US basement hardcore. It's so good. That's all I have to say about that. Except to thank Andy and Paul for getting me the 7". Totally appreciated.

8. ANGRY ANGLES - "Apparent Transparent" EP (Plastic Idol)
Everyone was shitting bricks over the JAY REATARD LP, and while I like that a lot, it only didn't make my January top ten because Martin had absconded with it before I could listen to it. I like this better. Maybe because I haven't heard the solo LP enough? I think I like this better because I like the format of the 7" better than an LP in general. This record also tricked me, "You Fell In" was one of my favorite songs of the year, totally got played over and over and over again, then I finally figured out that one of the reasons I love it so much is that it shared a remarkable similarity to one of my favorite URINALS songs, "Black Hole," which interestingly ANGRY ANGLES covered on another one of their 7"s. So. Hmm. Whatever though; I love this band. They have the knowing restraint of the new wave along with the recklessness of the best kind of gassed in thee garage KBD core.

9. GIANT HAYSTACKS - "A Rebirth of Our City" EP (Pizza! Pizza!)
I can't believe they are going to break up, especially after releasing this killer 7". I mean, I can believe it but it's a total bummer. This is like an ideal combination of *What Makes a Man Start Fires?* and "Damaged Goods", 7" version of course. The two Alans (sic) need to keep playing music or the Bay Area will suffer for sure. I don't know if this is a flattering comparison in his book, but Alan's lyrics are evocative like the best Paul Weller 7"s, like "A Town Called Malice" or "Going Underground," really. Political and incisive but not in a heavy-handed CRASS way. (Pun intended.)

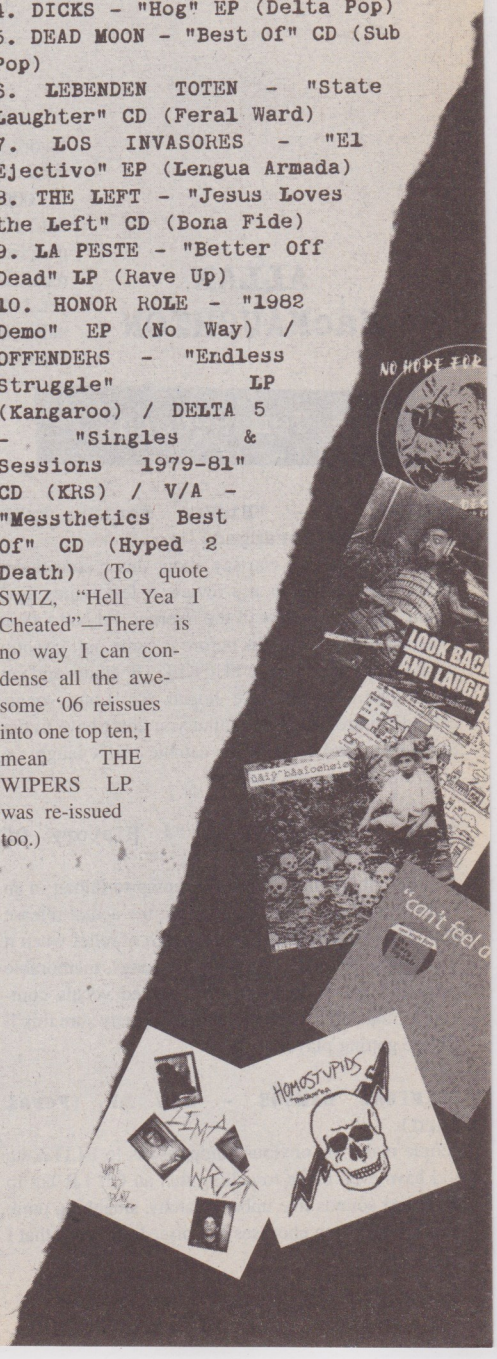
10. HOMOSTUPIDS - "The Glow" EP (My Mind's Eye)
Music that falls apart as you listen, that you can't tell if it's punk or art or hardcore or outsider music. There were other records that came out this year that I totally lost my shit over—the FUCKED UP 7" that La Vida Es Un Mus put out, the MANIKIN 12", that weird Belgian punk 12" that Golnar was obsessed with for a while *[PERIPHERIQUE EST —Ed]* the DESTRUCTION UNIT LP—but this record reminds me of why I consider myself a punk. Because it's contrary and makes no sense but is great anyway.

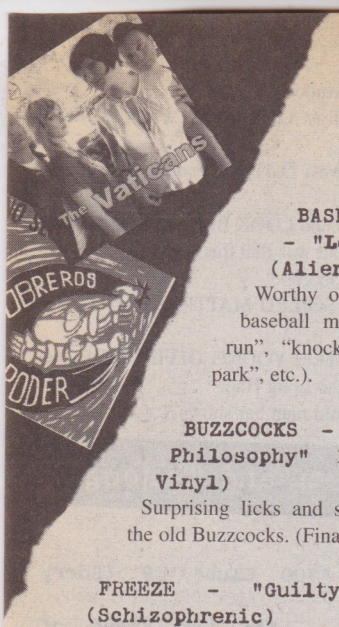
Live Undead, etc

1. ACID REFLUX basement show (*Pick Your King* versus *Cows and Beer*)
2. SPIDER AND THE WEBS bar show (13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS vs. SHOP ASSISTANTS)
3. Finally punk (MIKA MIKO x fireworks our yr teenage bedroom window)
4. SEX VID/CULT LOGIC/JUMP OFF A BUILDING house show
5. MIKA MIKO West Oakland desolate destruction show
6. PEDESTRIANS and LOOK BACK AND LAUGH in the basement, wait was that this year?
7. NO SLOGAN! So good
8. KIT, NO AGE, SOILED MATTRESS AND THE SPRINGS at ATA
9. PELIGRO SOCIAL, YOUNG OFFENDERS and SURRENDER at the Long Haul
10. FUCKED UP old man bar show.

Reissues and Discogs

1. KORO - "700 Club" EP (Sorry State)
2. THE FIX - "At the Speed of Twisted Thought" LP (Touch & Go)
3. DEEP WOUND - "Almost Complete" CD (Baked Goods)
4. DICKS - "Hog" EP (Delta Pop)
5. DEAD MOON - "Best Of" CD (Sub Pop)
6. LEBENDEN TOTEN - "State Laughter" CD (Feral Ward)
7. LOS INVASORES - "El Ejectivo" EP (Lengua Armada)
8. THE LEFT - "Jesus Loves the Left" CD (Bona Fide)
9. LA PESTE - "Better Off Dead" LP (Rave Up)
10. HONOR ROLE - "1982 Demo" EP (No Way) / OFFENDERS - "Endless Struggle" LP (Kangaroo) / DELTA 5 - "Singles & Sessions 1979-81" CD (KRS) / V/A - "Messthetics Best Of" CD (Hyped 2 Death) (To quote SWIZ, "Hell Yea I Cheated"—There is no way I can condense all the awesome '06 reissues into one top ten, I mean THE WIPERS LP was re-issued too.)





STEVE SPINALI

Top Ten Records

BASEBALL FURIES - "Lost Ones" EP (Alien Snatch)
Worthy of all the glowing baseball metaphors ("home-run", "knocked it out of the park", etc.).

BUZZCOCKS - "Flat Pack Philosophy" LP (Cooking Vinyl)
Surprising licks and songwriting recall the old Buzzcocks. (Finally.)

FREEZE - "Guilty Face" EP (Schizophrenic)
My heart still skips a beat listening to this terse classic, and the expanded track list doesn't hurt.

HOMOSTUPIDS - "The Glow" EP (My Mind's Eye)
Ultra-basic, trashy, and retarded.

JAY REATARD - "Blood Visions" CD (In The Red)
This surprise touched a soft spot—a fresh, clear twist on trash that keeps me smiling.

KETCHUPMANIA - "Your World" EP
Buzzy Japanese pop-punk has tunes that stick to the ribs, but short enough to be non-fattening.

KYKLOOPPIEN SUKUPOOTO/DEATH TOKEN - split EP (Spild Af Vinyl/Hate)
How do they make the same old thing sound fresh all over again? How do you pronounce them? Top-notch Finnish HC.

THE MAGGOTS - "Tammy Wynette" EP (Discourage)
Doesn't come with a maggot box like the original, but it's still amazingly tasteless and funny. Contains a sincere ode to Sid Vicious on the flip!

NEOS - "Hassibah Gets the Martian Brain Squeeze" EP (Rat Cage)
Fast and intelligently funny, this brings back fond memories of the Neos live.

VICIOUS - "Alienated" LP (Feral Ward)
An answer to those who dream of classic-style punk informed by a modern power.

ALLAN MacNAUGHTON

It's always difficult to look back at the records you've heard over the past year and try to make sense of them, to pick favorites. With the exception of maybe the FUCKED UP and THIS IS MY FIST albums, and possibly the TRANZMITORS EP, I can safely say that I listened to THE WHO, ADAM & THE ANTS, GARY NUMAN, or WIRE at least ten times more in 2006 than I listened to anything on this list. It takes a while for a record to get under my skin. It might be better to wait until 2011 and then write a "top ten records that came out in 2006 that I'm still listening to." By that assumption I should now list the records that came out in 2001 that I still listen to. I can't be arsed looking into that. Anyway, there are many records that came out last year that I liked a lot when I heard them at *MRR* but for one reason or another I haven't bought yet. I also didn't do a year end top ten last year and when I was putting this together a few of 2005's records had accidentally slipped in. It wasn't until I checked the release dates that I managed to purge them. REGULATIONS' *Electric Guitar* came out in 2005? Doesn't time fly!

Top Ten Records

FUCKED UP - "Hidden World" 2xLP (Jade Tree/Deranged)
There's not much I can say about this record that I didn't already say in my review a few issues ago. Thanks to the wonders of the internet, I'd had this in constant rotation months before it came out. Exactly what I'd expected from a FUCKED UP album and yet more than I could have hoped for. Long songs, extended intros and outros, but you don't have to dig too hard to find some of the catchiest riffs caught on record in the last ten years.

THIS IS MY FIST - "A History Of Rats" LP (No Idea)
Another album that I'd been listening to (albeit in an early, pre-release mix) long before the actual release date. Bay Area punks breathed a sigh of relief when it was finally released. Great catchy songs, memorable riffs, and gut-wrenching gravel-voiced vocals combine to make this a great album. I'm pretty sure this'll still be getting played in 2011.

CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
People make the obvious comparisons to BLITZ etc and have even taken to calling this an Oi! LP, but to me it just sounds like upbeat, catchy, singalong punk rock with rousing choruses and pissed-off lyrics that I can relate to. They've got a great guitar sound and the vocals are just right. Every song's a winner. Now if I could only see 'em live...

NIGHTINGALES - "Out Of True" (Iron Man)
I wasn't expecting this at all, but when a great band from the '80s comes out with a *credible* album in 2006, never mind a great one, you've got to take notice. This isn't a cash-in attempt—just a good record by people who know what they're doing. BEEFHEART or FALL fans should do themselves a favor and check this out.

LOVE SONGS - "Behind Enemy Lines in G# Major" CD (625/Wajlemac)
A punk rock concept album? You know it! From the tunes to the lyrics to the artwork/lyric sheet, the whole thing links together impeccably. Craigums has proved that the #1 Air Guitarist in America can actually rock for real.

TRANZMITORS - "Bigger Houses, Broken Homes/Glamour Girls" (Deranged)
Much like THE FUSES' "Sex Crimes" of a couple of years ago, this 7" became the feel-good hit of the summer 'round our house. Never mind the B-side, I just kept flipping the needle back to the start of "Bigger Houses," over and over again. It's rare indeed to hear such a perfect slice of quirky punk power pop. TRANZMITORS put out three (I think?) singles in 2006 but this one was by far the best. I eagerly await the LP that is apparently coming out this year.

THE VATICANS - "Little Jimmy/Digital World" (Pure Filth)
Two perfect pop moments. Despite the two old bald geezers in the band, they've managed to pull off a great combination of '60s girl-group harmonies with quirky '70s punk/powerpop sensibilities. Great stuff.

HARD SKIN - "We Are The Wankers" EP (Rudeness)
By this point you know what to expect from HARD SKIN, and they deliver in spades. The longer they keep this joke up the better at it they get. The title track of this EP is a classic from start to finish. I don't know how they manage to squeeze so many Cockney clichés into one song. "Doing the Lambeth walk" indeed. Genius. (This only came out in Japan but it should be getting a US release any minute now on Feral Ward.)

LOSER LIFE - "Things Will Never Change/It's All Over" (Going Underground/Bakersfield)
I'd hate to see this band overlooked just because of their location. Bakersfield isn't a "hip" scene (yet!) but it has some great bands and committed, energetic people. The LOSER LIFE 7" is the sound of

nowheresville desperation. Elements of LEATHERFACE and ARTICLES OF FAITH pepper their angst-ridden melodic hardcore. Live, all the guitar and bass amps are piled up directly behind the drummer/singer, and I imagine his eardrums getting completely blown out as he screams his way free of his small town existence.

DECONDITIONED – "Big Act/Compartment K3" (Beginning Era)
This Washington band is no longer with us, but this two-song single is a fitting end to their brief life. Dark, psychotic later BLACK FLAG/SCRATCH ACID influenced hardcore punk.

Close but didn't quite make the top ten:
SEX VID – *Drugging* EP, MIKA MIKO – *CYSLABF* (At first the vocals got on my nerves but after persistent listening this record got under my skin), ERASE ERRATA - *Nightlife*, THE GOSSIP - *Standing In The Way Of Control* (Beth Ditto is the female Gary Floyd. Imagine THE GOSSIP covering THE DICKS' "Rich Daddy"...totally works, right?), COLDBRINGER – *Lust And Ambition* 12", MANIKIN LP, FOURTH ROTOR –*Plain* LP, NO SLOGAN – *No Pasaran* EP, THE NIX– *Speed Freaks* EP, TYVEK EP, ARMITAGE SHANKS – *Smash The Cistern* EP, THE BAYONETTES – *Stuck In This Rut*, YOUNG OFFENDERS – Demo.

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

LPs/12"s

1. CRIMINAL DAMAGE – s/t LP (Feral Ward)
I listened to this record so much that it became a running joke at the house. Chris rolled his eyes every time I pulled it out, friends told me they didn't buy it because they heard it here so much, and I got caught by more than one person getting to the end of the LP and then flipping it over to start again. But I was unfazed. I have been waiting my whole life for a band to put out a record so relentlessly anthemic. Bow to the power of CRIM DAM.

2. GORILLA ANGREB – "Bedre Tider" 12" (Feral Ward)
We all know that there have been a lot of great bands from Copenhagen, Denmark in the 2000s, but for me GORILLA ANGREB is the best of them. Mai's vocals are incredibly affecting—angry but moving, playful but firm, etc. Put this one in a time capsule to prove to future species that human beings produced at least *one* thing of worth during our fucked up existence…

3. OUT WITH A BANG! – "I'm Against It!" 12" (Proud to Be Idiot/Vida Loca)
A note to bands that are trying to be "shocking"—don't. Your phony nihilism doesn't impress me. These Italian fuck-ups (perhaps channeling some older FUCK-UPS), on the other hand, do impress me, and very much so. This is probably because they are not really trying to. Acerbic, irreverent, snotty, scathing, ridiculous, hilarious fucking hardcore punk for the punx.

4. MIKA MIKO – "CYSLABF" LP (PPM)
Five young women from L.A. duplicate the desperate teenage energy of the first RED CROSS 12" *and* the joie de vivre of KLEENEX nearly perfectly. The perfect combination of tensely awkward and coolly unafraid = my dream band.

5. REIGNING SOUND – "Live At Goner" LP (Goner)
It took me a few years of people freaking out about this band for it to finally sink in. One day a few months ago, I pulled this LP out of the collection and listened—I mean *really* listened—to this band for the first time. Conversion didn't take long—I immediately bought all of the REIGNING SOUND records I could find, but I went to this record again and again as my 2:00 a.m., drunk on whiskey, nothing-feels-better-than-(maximum)-rock'n'roll standby. The song "Bad Man" is genius-like.

6. JAY REATARD – "Blood Visions" LP (In the Red)
Soundtrack to many a dance party here at *MRR* HQ. Martin brought the white wine, JAY REATARD brought the dark punkwave anthems, and I brought, uh, myself. "My Shadow" is the best song since "One-Chord Wonders" by that band everyone references when they talk about this LP.

7. TRAGEDY – "Nerve Damage" LP (Tragedy)
Dudes, it's TRAGEDY. They put out a record in 2006. Uh, it is on my year-end best of. And…uh…that's it, because you already know about this band and have their apocalypse bird tattooed to your forehead. Whatevz man, this is fucking crushing.

8. PELIGRO SOCIAL – "No Religion" LP (Tank Crimes/No Options)
Here are your instructions: Book a plane ticket to San Francisco. Proceed directly to the Balazo Gallery in SF's Mission District. Have PELIGRO SOCIAL completely melt your brain with their electrifying live show. Wonder at how a band can remind you of old Basque radikal rock *and* the Bad Brains *and* have so many guitar solos. Buy this LP as a memento of the best show of your life. Punch a cop in the face.

9. CROW – "Bloody Tear" LP (Prank)
This LP is a powerhouse of well-executed Japanese HC that is, as far as I'm concerned, peerless. The tension builds with the opening moments of controlled feedback, and just when you feel like the pressure is making you feel nauseated and/or dizzy, you arrive: Riff City.

10. MANIKIN – "Still" 12" (540)
Dark and tense, good for a soundtrack of your life, if your life is a film noir with a post-punk soundtrack. Icy guitar parts and vocals that leave you chilled, but definitely don't leave you cold.

7"s

1. SEX VID – "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
Full disclosure: I helped put this record out. Truth: The only reason I did so was because it was too good not to—seriously, this is HC punk of life-changing proportions. Raging hardcore freakout with obvious nods to DIE KREUZEN, CCM, and the nervous breakdown you are on the verge of having. As perfect as a hardcore band can be.

2. KIELTOLAKI – "Maailma Menee Helvettiin" EP (Moo Cow)
Finnish hardcore…how are you still so good? Lots of ideas packed into these terse, intense three songs that make something old sound like something new. Better than 99% of hardcore records, ever.

3. OTAN – "El Indominable" EP (Mindless Mutant)
Perfect, angry hardcore from Barcelona that brings together the best elements of classic anarcho punk, old Spanish HC, and everything that is good about the music that we listen to and the aesthetic and ethics we abide by. And my inside sources say they are even better live. Punk's (still) not dead.

4. LOOK BACK & LAUGH – "Street Terrorism" EP (Deranged)
I have said all I can say about this band, so I just kneel down speechless and continue to worship at their alter…

5. NO SLOGAN – "No Parasan" EP (Southkore)
The current Chicago scene is just exploding with awesome bands, and NO SLOGAN put out my favorite record of the bunch. A very Chicago band (think BHOPAL STIFFS, EFFIGIES, the word "whoa-oh"), but with an angrier edge, great art, well thought-out lyrics, and some unexpected music influences as well. A sleeper hit.

6. HJERTESTOP – "Aargh, Fuck...Der ar Hjertestop" EP (Kick 'n' Punch)
Danish HC still rules, OK!

7. LIMP WRIST – "Want Us Dead" EP (Lengua Armada/Cheap Art)
The triumphant vinyl return of these dreamy queer punk heroes, and one with more swagger, a punker (re: less thrashy) sound, and songs that are more memorable than any they've written before.

8. GIANT HAYSTACKS – "Rebirth of Our City" EP (Pizza! Pizza!)
The lyrics to "Rebirth of Our City"—about gentrification in Oakland—give me chills: "A rebirth of our city/Concrete doesn't make it true/Ghosts of Panthers on MLK/Hang their heads then fade away…You can

paint your pictures of guns/it's a thrill to slum it but the real guns kill." Allan's guitar parts are awesome, and this EP showcases this band's pop sensibilities even more than the LP.

9. GRUPO SUB-1/WEBELOS - split EP (All Blondes Must Die)
Here's the secret: GRUPO SUB-1 is just WEBELOS with a different name, so this is basically a split record with themselves. Madrid "nyah-nyah-nyah" snotcore, with an obvious love of *Bloodstains Across Spain*. You may not be paying attention to this little scene now, what with all those ex-INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY bands taking up your time, but if you like real punk rock you will be hunting for this record at some point, and I will be there to gloat and tell you I told you so.

10. TYVEK - "Mary Ellen Claims/Honda" (X!)
TYVEK edged out KVOTERINGEN, CHRONIC SEIZURE, and FEROCIOUS X for this last spot but you know what? The A-side reminds me of BLUE ORCHIDS, and none of those other bands even know who BLUE ORCHIDS are (even though, in the interest of fairness, I imagine that TYVEK doesn't listen to much DISCARD or whatever). It was easy, it was cheap, go and do it!

Honorary Mention:
V/A - "Public Safety" LP (MRR)
Suffice it say, we listened to this record a lot. After about 4,578,921,345,534 listens, I am still fucking stoked.

Reissues

LOS INVASORES - El Ejectivo 7" (Lengua Armada)
A TOUCH OF HYSERIA - Demo one-sided 12" (Demo Tapes)
THE FIX - At the Speed of Twisted Thought LP (Touch & Go)
TOREROS AFTER OLÉ - "Porom Pom Pero" 2xEP (Munster)
DICKS - "Hog" EP (Delta Pop)

RAY LUJAN

Top Ten Records

1. RANDY - "The Band" CD
What more can I say? These Swedes just keep the tuneful punk and rock'n'roll coming. The second coming of the NEWTOWN NEUROTICS perhaps.

2. CONCRETE GODS - "Anglo-Centric Generation" CD
The perfect mix of COCKSPARRER and THE JOLT. 1978-sounding punk with mod overtones.

3. SUICIDE BID - "This Is The Generation" CD
Dirty punk reggae with political lyrics. This could have been a 1980 Rough Trade release. Very UK.

4. SINKING SHIPS - "Disconnected" CD
Hardcore, maybe melodic hardcore from up North. Reminds me of early STRIKE ANYWHERE with a bit of BULLET LAVOLTA. Screaming and hooks.

5. BANNER PILOT - "Pass the Poison" CD
A mix of DILLINGER 4 and JAWBREAKER with hoarse vocals and speedy tunes. This new band has it going on.

6. THE ERGS - "Jersey's Best Prancers" CD
More speedy power pop from these East Coasters. One of the best bands around these days.

7. LATTERMAN - "We Are Still Alive" CD
No change in sound for these guys, just another great batch of spirited tunes on the punk front. Three great full lengths and counting.

8. FIFTH HOUR HERO - "Not Revenge...Just a Vicious Crush" CD
A little less DISCOUNT and a little more HÜSKER DÜ on this one. Guitars aplenty and some strong songwriting.

9. PRETTY BOY THORSON AND THE FALLEN ANGELS - "Ain't It Funny" CD
Call it cow punk or college rock drawl a la THE REPLACEMENTS or SOUL ASYLUM. I just find this full length infectious.

10. RADIO DAYS - s/t CD
Hooky pop punk from Italy in the vein of SCREECHING WEASEL and THE TRAVOLTAS. A good sing-a-long.

CAROLYN KEDDY

Top Ten Records

THE VATICANS - "Digital World/Little Jimmy" (Pure Filth)
THE VATICANS are one of the great treasures of the San Francisco rock scene. They have been through a couple of lineup changes and a momentary name change, yet they just keep getting better. Modish pop songs with great female vocals and a brief lapse into Mancunian punk on the A-side's "Digital World." This 7" isn't enough to satisfy me, but the great songs, lots of attitude, and cool '60s girl group style almost make up for it. The boys do a nice job too.

GIANT HAYSTACKS - "A Rebirth Of Our City" EP (Pizza! Pizza!)
GIANT HAYSTACKS continues their rise as one of the best bands of the '00s. Every new release is even better than the last. Isn't it supposed to be the other way around? Post-punk the way it was done back in day, yet it sounds fresh, not forced. Minimalist blasts of music with political lyrics. The songs are so good you don't really think about the message until you are humming it on the way home. Hah-hah.

OM - "Conference of the Birds" LP (Holy Mountain)
I have never been a stoner. I prefer a two-minute song to a five-minute one. Listen to classic rock? No. So why would I pick a LP with only two songs over 15 minutes each on it? A single riff. The first minute I heard the opening riff to "Flight Of the Eagle" (the B-side of this LP) I was hooked. Then the vocals kick in with a laid back sort of monotonous style. It is so goddamned catchy I can't help myself. I love it!

HIPSHAKES - "Not Oblivians" EP (Goner)
A fun concept, taking the titles of OBLIVIANS songs and writing original songs for them. Hence *Not Oblivians*. The two songs "Big Black Hole" and "Never Enough" are similar in style, but HIPSHAKES manages to infuse enough creativity in each song. They have their own great style making these songs surpass the gimmick. It's brilliant.

PISSED JEANS - "Shallow" LP (Parts Unknown)
Lots of screaming, feedback, and insane (and fortunately brief) guitar solos remind me a lot of the BUTTHOLE SURFERS back in their heyday. The singer sounds as if he is in agony most of the time and the band is too busy making noise to care. Then out of nowhere comes a very cool riff and everything is turned around. Not to mention the anthemic "Boring Girls," which even features a very BUTTHOLES-esque high-pitched backing vocal. I can't get enough of this stuff.

PETS - "Only One/Neverending Tree" (Broken Rekids)
The catchiest band to hit the streets of San Francisco

this year. They bring back power pop to a city that needs it more than ever. These guys released three singles (the others on Raw Deluxe and Sweet Rot) and although all of them should have made this list, I pick this one because "Only One" is my favorite song. It's mushy and sappy, but oh-so-catchy. I guess I'm a closet romantic. Yikes!

BLACK TIME - "Dance Party" EP (Bancroft)
It was toss up between this EP and their wonderful album *Midnight World* (In The Red). Once again, I let one song determine my selection. "Girls In The Garage" is so fun, bratty, and saucy. It's a simple, repetitive song, but then again all the best ones are. The riff is cool and the male and female vocals have just the right touch. I would almost never turn this record over if I didn't remember that the other side has two other great songs on it.

ROYAL PAINS - "Get Punched" EP (Johny Cat)
My record score of the year. I found this one in a record store free bin. Why? The only answer could be that it is slightly warped because if anyone listened to this record and thought it sucked they should just end it now. The title track is too cool. Screechy female vocals backed by a deep-voiced male singing about fighting. They make it sound like so fun, you just have to sing along. The others songs are equally good, catchy riffs with the playful male-female vocals. Great stuff.

OUT WITH A BANG - "I'm Against It" 12" (Proud to Be Idiot/Vida Loca)
I first heard about this band when Davide, ex-GRABBIES, PTBI CEO, told me that Alessandro aka Anus also ex-GRABBIES and the other PTBI CEO (who is back in Verona, Italy after deserting San Francisco) was now playing in a pop punk band. I was a bit concerned. Could all of that nonsense have been a cover up and Anus was now ready to sell out? Oh, well. A year later Davide gives me a copy of this record. Of course, it isn't pop punk. It is pure, angry hardcore. There has probably been some more thought put into these songs than any of the GRABBIES releases, but all the nastiness and fun is still there. With eight songs on a one-sided 45 rpm 12" you don't have much time to think about it either. So I don't. I just enjoy.

LIMES - "Rock'N'Roll Heart" EP (Nasty Product)
How could it possibly be my year-end best of list without a Jack Oblivian release? I won't disappoint, even if Jack O seems to have a backseat role in this band. Four soulful garage rock tunes that just get my blood boiling. Twangy guitars and low, mournful vocals. It's just too hot and too cool.

Honorable Mentions (Why couldn't it be a top 20?):
NIX – "Speed Freaks" EP
SEX VID – "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
THE SUSPICIONS – LP (Rip Off)
THE HUSBANDS – "There's Nothing I'd Like More Than To See You Dead" CD (Swami)
JAY REATARD – "Blood Visions" LP (In The Red)
MIKA MIKO – "C.Y.S.L.A.B.F." LP (PPM)
CHEVEU – "Dog/ Make My Day" (S-S)
INTELLECTUALS/ RIVER CITY TANLINES – split 7" (Gonna Puke)
MUCK AND THE MIRES – "1-2-3-4" CD (Dionysus)
ANGRY ANGLES – "Apparent Transparent" EP (Plastic Idol)

Biggest Reissue Surprises

With most reissues I always know what to expect, as I've already heard the records. Three reissues I never heard before blew me away this year.

THE RALPHS - "Zeros, No Ones" LP (Existential Vacuum)
FIGURES OF LIGHT - "It's Lame" 7" (Norton)
GEORGE BRIGMAN - "Jungle Rot" LP (Anopheles)

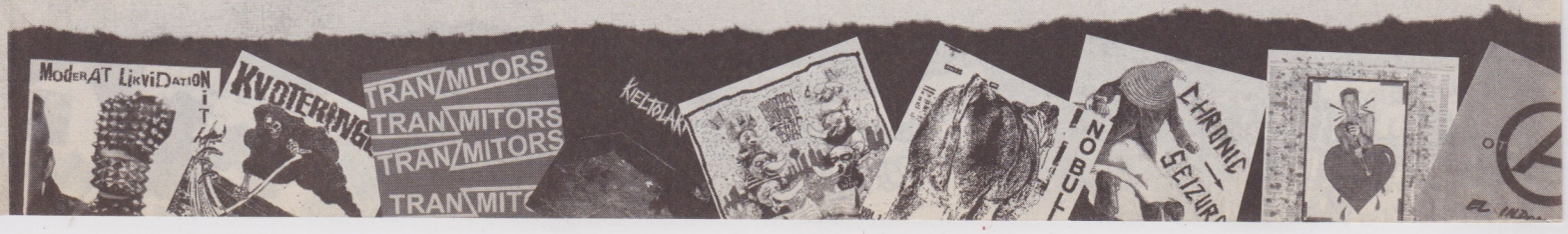
KEN SANDERSON

Top Ten Records

When I read the Top 10s for 2005 in *MRR*, I was struck by how *impossible* a lot of the records were to find. I live ten minutes from one of the largest independent records stores in the country—though arguably not the best punk store in the country—and if I can't find half this stuff, what hope does the average *MRR* reader out in the hinterland of the US or world, where increasingly there are *no* record stores? Unless they obsessively pre-order and order online. Same time, it's a buyer's market in indie labels right now. There's a glut of product and it makes sense that most labels are doing 500 or 1,000 records and moving on to the next release. That said, I feel a lot of the outreach of the underground is being stunted, as by the time more casual followers of underground punk or people in far corners of the globe catch on, the records are long gone. I guess there's always mp3s and Soulseek... But as "top ten RECORDS of the year" I hope you can track these down and I've tried not to list anything limited to 50... Conversely, with the glut of records, it's near impossible to hear everything that comes out in one year, but here's the ones that brightened my corner of the world, in no order:

PESD - "Politikarepoizonekurvae" LP (Trujaca Fala)
I laughed, looking through the reviews of the last year in MRR that I could just turn in a top ten with NECROS *Conquest For Death*, WIPERS *Is This Real?*, ZERO BOYS *Vicious Circle*, all these old classic records that were re-issued and reviewed in 2006. I really feel, from downloading, eBay, reissues and enough time and distance for appreciation that the past casts almost too much of a shadow on the present, but despite my great reverence and love for punk's rich history I don't think it was ever meant to obfuscate the future and prevent it from continuing to find new ground. This decade has been marked by a lot of refinement of past forms and "sounds like (x)", but so far, this is probably my pick for the best record produced this decade as it stands far in left field from anything. Experimental, adventurous, and at the same time devastatingly crushing hardcore. A collaboration between a member of POST REGIMENT and TRAGEDIA, with a MINISTRY-style industrial feel, a healthy influence of classic Polish hardcore and a dark near gothic edge, It's a record that you can't just drop a needle on randomly and "get," it's more of a complete, well thought out album that demands to be listened to from start to finish. I loved this record so much that I issued it here in the states on vinyl on my label Prank a few months later. Same time my edition of this record also got the all time worst review in MRR anything I've ever put out has ever gotten, so it's not for everybody, but for me this files right in with ARMIA, DEZERTER, and POST REGIMENT in the Valhalla of classic Polish hardcore. Runner up: All the records I released on my label Prank in 2006: BORN/DEAD *Endless War: Repetition* CD (some of my favorite material by Oakland's finest), CROW *Bloody Tear* LP (and for good measure the recent ARTIMUS PYLE—who Prank still works with—and their recent head crushing *Kuroi* 7" (Wrench In The Gears), and *Black Shroud* CD (Missing Link) releases)...

I SHOT CYRUS / DISCARGA - split LP (Peculio Discos)
The I SHOT CYRUS side might be the most energetic, completely over the top hardcore record made this year. It makes it sound like the rest of the world isn't even *trying* to make extreme fast hardcore. It's just absolutely impossible to do anything while listening to it, outside of (like the best of hardcore records) starting to smash stuff and throw things, it's so severe, amped, hyper, energetic, and intense, like the pitch control has been turned way into the red. Ridiculously fast with rapid fire drumming, the vocals even faster, like a machine gun spitting lethal hardcore as the 625 fastcore mantra is taken to its apex. Top shelf, world class hardcore. DISCARGA solidly holds their own in a similar style, further proving



Brazil has one of the best hardcore scenes going worldwide. Runner up: UNIDOS PELO ODIO *Renascendo Pas Cinzas* CD (Terrorotten), which is more Brazilian rampaging, unrelenting, boot-to-the-face hardcore savagery, heavy on the metallic throttling RATOS DE PORAO-style bent but with great melodic sing alongs amidst the chaos.

RUIN - "Distort/Confuse" 7" (Putrid Filth Conspiracy)
Less metallic than their awesome debut LP, this EP by various UK veterans surfaces a more stripped down yet equally brutal old style CHAOS UK attack but remains relevant and not retro through on-point lyrics and extensive backed information. Runner up: WAR-CRY *Deprogram* 12" (Feral Ward). No new tricks here, just perfected, advanced level D-Beat with Japanese rock flair fueled with a bit more raw power than their debut LP. The Portland/Memphis Mafia is the studied master of adapting and perfecting different hardcore styles, and this is just further proof.

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH - "Totalitarian Sodomy" LP (Hardcore Holocaust)
Taking a long break from their last LP, Austin's WB2D come back with an ambitious LP with over the top art, an impressive well thought out booklet and lyrics and a heavier rock driven wallop to their Scandinavian-influenced hardcore chassis. An ambitious undertaking, fueled by powerful music and dark vision. Runner Up: ACTS OF SEDITION/BAFABEGIYA split LP. Like WB2D, lots of care and thought went into this LP, the booklet inside it, and the music and lyrics, all of which shows, the BAFABEGIYA side possibly having the best artwork of any record released this year. Both bands have relevant, thoughtful lyrics, and Reno's BAFABEGIYA a serious ECONOCHRIST-styled attack while the Bay Area's ACTS OF SEDITION delivers flat out blazing fast hardcore.

DEATHCYCLE - s/t LP (Lifeline/ Chainsaw Safety)
We're now seven years into the Bush Presidency. At its outset, there was the hope that this would cause some sort of hardcore renaissance of anger and innovation like in the 1980s. Ironically, there was more innovation under Clinton and a surprising lack of point blank, relevant political hardcore. This New York band's LP however is excellent, tough, in your face modern political hardcore with current political relevance and sort of a less overtly crusty but none-the-less rampaging NAUSEA feel tempered with a more discordant modern metallic bite. Runner up: SLEEPER CELL LP (Partners in Crime) another great entry to the Partners In Crime DEATHREAT/ BALANCE OF TERROR/NO PARADE canon, which is exceptional, well-delivered, and intense hardcore that in no way feels "retro."

PHOBIA - "Cruel" LP (Deep Six)
I don't like grind because most "grind bands" just bring the basic requisites of the style (the grunting, the blast beats) to the table thinking it qualifies it as extreme. It doesn't. When it's good, it's either delivered with a raw unpredictability or pushed to completely over the top levels. PHOBIA has always been a solid band, but this LP is just completely jaw-dropping in its savagery, the stop, start and brutal delivery pushed to new highs. I was as stunned as anyone that this kept finding its way to my turntable, but I'm glad it did. Runner up: HATRED SURGE—live. Their 7" and split are good, but the two times in 2006 I had the pleasure of seeing HATRED SURGE help put power violence back on the map were phenomenal.

TOTALITÄR - "Vi Är Eltien" EP (Feral Ward)
I'm heavily biased (the title track is also the title of the new LP that will come out on Prank in 2007) but for their final recording TOTALITÄR have pulled no punches, with mastery of their craft of rampaging D-beat hardcore, desperate vocals, and brutal attack. Didn't see the SVART PARAD cover coming. Runner Up: KVOTERINGEN *Vidrig Maskinell Framfart* 7" (Terrorotten). More measured than their debut, but still delivering classic lo-fi raw Swedish hardcore that demands to be cranked as loud as possible. Ace.

2:20 - s/t LP (Sjakk Matt)
Mid-tempo hardcore from Norway, with an unmistakably moodiness and feeling like the best moments of later SO MUCH HATE and melody akin to LEATHERFACE or something of that ilk, marked with a heavy lean to late '80s/'90s style musical progression. Some of those elements detract from making this—like a lot of music from that '87-'94 time period—a total ramcharger, but the expansive mood and feeling of tracks like "Ponkrakk" and "Blanke Ark" make this a really warm enjoyable listen of classic Norwegian hardcore. (Scandinavian) Runner up: VICTIMS–*Divide and Conquer* LP (Havoc) on their third (and a half) LP, and after 40+ tracks it might seem easy to be inured to Sweden's VICTIMS attack of harsh D-beat attack but as they come full circle to the stripped down old style Swedish hardcore of their debut 7" and shed a lot of their metallic elements, the solidity of their songs, the brutality of their delivery and the rawness of this recording keeps this on edge.

V/A - "Public Safety" LP (MRR)
Compilations were pretty much nailed in the coffin by the 99-cent label samplers of the 1990s. They're tricky and difficult to assemble but the MRR crew who assembled this did a bang up job, with an excellent selection of diverse tracks from the DIY hardcore and punk community. I don't think it's *Welcome To 1984*, I don't think it's *Not So Quiet On The Western Front*, I don't think it's *They Don't Get Paid*, and I don't think it should be. It has some of the best aspects of all of those previous compilations, is a really enjoyable listen and I hope will reach people a little more out of touch with current underground hardcore, who might check this out and be introduced to great bands like FRAMTID, SLEEPER CELL, LIMP WRIST, SIGNAL LOST and more. My only minor complaint is the omission of a few major scenes (Brazil, the UK, Australia) that are chock full of killer bands right now, but otherwise it's a solid line up of great tracks. Runner up: V/A - *No Bullshit Volume 1* 7" (No Way) which is worth the price alone for the riveting STRUNG UP song "Bent."

FUCKED UP - "Hidden World" 2xLP (Jade Tree/Deranged)
I've always resisted loving this band, their singles often were either classics (*Police*, *Litany*) or reheated retreads of themselves and preceded by (not the band's fault mind you) so much hype that it made for a lot of disappointing spins when the records only half delivered...Add on their Pokemon collector bullshit that seems to exist solely to create mediocre collectibles (no, your 7" doesn't really need to be issued as a 12" or with several different weak B-sides, because at a point it's become watered down) and I'm iffy. Same time FUCKED UP are the reigning champions right now of "hardest working band in hardcore": I've seen them book, like, three shows in one day, and when you work that hard your band only gets better. This LP is evidence of that, as it surfaces a lot of the catchy songwriting of their best singles, draws the compositions out, adds some classic rock and few total Keith Moon-style drum parts, exceptional recording and comes out on top. Ambitious record, thumbs up. Unrelated yet equally ambitious runner up: PELIGRO SOCIAL–"No Religion" LP (Tank Crimes/No Options). Deftly combines the rock edge of SOCIAL DISTORTION with classic old-style Spanish hardcore. Not quite as great as their energetic live shows, but a solidly great LP nonetheless.

FLOYD

LPs:
MIND CONTROLS - s/t LP
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS - "Hospitals" 12"
CHINESE TELEPHONES/POTENTIAL JOHNS - split 12"
HEADACHE CITY - s/t LP
THE MEASURE (SA) - "Historical Fiction" LP
CARBONAS - "Cold War" LP
TOYS THAT KILL - "Shanked" LP
MARKED MEN - "Fix My Brain" LP
DEAD TO ME - "Cuban Ballerina" LP
MODERN MACHINES - "Take It Somebody" LP
ARMALITE - s/t LP

7"s:
KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS - "Tommy of the River" 45
HIPSHAKES - 45
HOMOSTUPIDS - "The Glow" 45
TOUCH ME NOTS - "Hey Television" 45
GIANT HAYSTACKS - "A Rebirth of Our City" EP
Every 45 by the following bands: TRANZMITORS, PETS, and BAYONETTES
I also want to point out that the following labels didn't put out a bad 7" all year: Snuffy Smile, Goner, and Shattered.

CD Only Releases:
ASH COUNTY SLUGGERS -s/t CD
VAGINASORE JR - s/t CD
THE COPYRIGHTS - "Mutiny Pop" CD

MICHAEL HOWES

Top Ten Records

GRAF ORLOCK - "Destination Time Yesterday" CD (Level-Plane)
It's always hard to describe something I like so much and is somewhat unique sounding. Chaotic, heavy, funny, and tons of movie samples. Live they floored me and the CD captures that energy. Something new in hardcore?

ROTTEN SOUND - "Consume to Contaminate" CDEP (Spinefarm)
When a band has been around more than ten years consistently putting out great grind releases sometimes it gets easy to ignore them. When I first listened to this EP I had to stop what I was doing and listen. Grindcore at it's finest.

PHOBIA - "Cruel" CD (Willowtip)
See what I said for ROTTEN SOUND. I've always loved PHOBIA but I think their last few releases are their best. When I first dropped the needle on this release I couldn't believe it was even the same band. Faster, tighter, and still as political as fuck. Their new drummer has really helped but if I was the drummer I'd be worried, PHOBIA seems to have a SPINAL TAP issue with drummers.

BURIAL YEAR - "Pestilence" CD (Alone)
It was a cold, rainy day in early January; I went to Gilman to catch BURIAL YEAR and nobody was there. BURIAL YEAR went on and where heavy as anything I had seen in a while. The band seemed like one entity that night, completely in sync with each other. As I left I hoped the new CD would finally capture that energy, since I thought the first EP didn't. It does.

BORN/DEAD - "Endless War…Repetition" CD (Prank)
This is what I consider catchy. Anarcho-hardcore anthems in a straight ahead hardcore sound. I like the lyrics more than most.

MASSMORD - "Inget Liv/Ingen Dod" CD (Crimes Against Humanity)
There is a ton of crusty hardcore in the world. Too much! The cream of the crop is still worth a listen and this is one of those bands. This release is also probably the best thing I discovered because of reviewing at *MRR*. Does anyone get tired of the female/male trade-off vocals?

ELECTRO QUARTERSTAFF - "Gretzky" CD (Willowtip)
Instrumental math-metal where the band remembered to write songs. Every time I listen to this I think, can I like an instrumental metal record this much? I do! Part thrash, part grind, and all somewhat complex.

HEWHOCORRUPTS - "Microeconimics" CDEP (Level-Plane)
I love their capitalist irony and unique sound. This EP has more variation in speeds and seems less grind.

V/A - "Public Safety" CD (MRR)
I realized after listening to this a few times that it's a great diverse collection of songs. So many comps can blur by and sound OK but are full of forgettable songs. This is not the case with this comp. Like a good mix tape.

V/A - "Euro Thrash Retribution" CD (625 Thrash)
You know those comps you pick up that you not only love but you learn a lot from? You end up discovering a lot of bands you'd never heard before? This is one of those for me. I was only familiar with a handful of these bands and ended up finding five or six bands I really like. I love that most bands have multiple tracks, which can often give you a better idea of what a band is about. Play Fast!

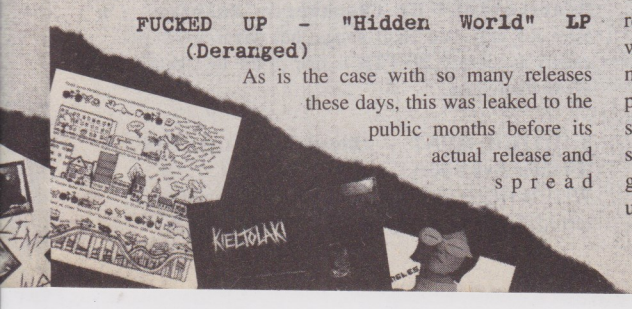
ROB COONS

Top Ten Records

HEADACHE CITY - s/t LP (Shit Sandwich)
Shit man, I think this CD got more airtime with me than almost anything else on this list. I remember just randomly picking it out of the review bin, putting it on and instantly being blown away by the outright catchiness of every fucking tune on this thing. Synth filled pop-edged punk, with restless vocals and more hooks than you can shake a stick at. These songs are perfectly crafted and this release is an essential addition to anybody's collection.

TRAGEDY - "Nerve Damage" LP (Tragedy)
I don't understand why this band causes so much controversy. I guess when you become popular and are at the top of your game, people just want to tear you down. Regardless of their social standing, these dudes just keep cranking out one epic release after another. As the record starts out with a wailing siren and that first guitar note is dropped you just know this fucking thing is going to be *massive*. As always, they continue to spawn countless rip-offs, but nobody does it as good as the original.

FUCKED UP - "Hidden World" LP (Deranged)
As is the case with so many releases these days, this was leaked to the public months before its actual release and spread across the internet like wildfire. I snagged it off some file-sharing network and upon my first listen I wasn't sure what to think. I mean the first song on this record is almost seven minutes long, which is way past my musical attention span level. Plus it seems a little slower and more experimental than their past releases. And yet, as I gave it repeated listens it has grown on me like you can't imagine and definitely has turned into one of my favorite releases of the year. Listening to this is like getting punched square in the face and then getting coddled a second later as sweet nothings are whispered in your ear. Seriously mind blowing! And by the way, I still bought it even though I had a free copy.



CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
Wait a minute; is this a long lost BLITZ record? No, it is actually a new(er) band from Portland that perfectly melds Oi! and punk into one superb release. Following in the footsteps of bands like NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS, CRIMINAL DAMAGE are bringing melodic punk back with a vengeance. This is truly catchy as fuck... and yes it really does sound just like BLITZ.

VICIOUS - all releases (Feral Ward, Wasted Sounds)
These Swedes came out of nowhere, put out a slew of releases and stomped all over our needy eardrums with their outstandingly melodic punk rock. Instantly memorable songs that sound like a mix of old So Cal punk, mixed with some Swedish Bloodstains era stuff. I think what really drives it home for me is the singer's haunting vocal style giving them an almost goth-feeling edge. I hope they have more in store for us in '07. (And how about a US tour?)

V/A - "No Bullshit Vol. 1" EP (No Way)
Most current release compilations rarely catch my ear these days because they are just too varied and poorly done. And yet, I have two in my year-end top ten including this little gem. This release is the perfect version of "Wham, bam thank you ma'am". Five hot shit tunes from CAREER SUICIDE, GOVERNMENT WARNING, DIRECT CONTROL, BAD DIRTY HATE, and STRUNG UP. It comes at you so fast and furious that you barely have time to think about what just hit you. No excess bullshit… just short, to the point and most importantly, absolutely fucking raging!

EXPLODING HEARTS - "Shattered" CD (Dirtnap)
Shit, what can I say about this band that hasn't been said before? They were creating some of the most perfect power pop that had been made in years before their untimely demise. This CD compiles some previously released EP tracks, plus a few unreleased, alternative mix and demo tracks. I know there were numerous delays in getting this out to the public, but I am so glad that it has finally seen the light of day. I mean who needs black leather and spikes when you can have pink denim and bandanas?

V/A - "Public Safety" LP (MRR)
I know that *MRR* didn't review this release in the magazine since we put it out, but that won't stop me from putting it in my year-end top ten. Simply put this compilation contains songs from 26 of the best bands around in the punk scene today. From the first song by the FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES to the last song by SIN DIOS, this comp rocks non-stop. The first time I heard that FRAMTID song I thought a nuclear bomb

was exploding in my head. And the insane sounding guitar tone on that REGRESS song is beyond description. I could go on and on about all the bands on this release, but I think you get the idea.

MINDLESS MUTANT - "Without" EP (625) and MIND ERASER - "Glacial Reign" LP (Painkiller)
Obviously this is more than one release, but I just couldn't decide which release should get the "throat stomper of the year" award. Both these bands take their cue from the classic powerviolence bands of the '90s and create insanely fast and heavy tunes that just obliterate everything in their path. I got to see MIND ERASER live this year (and they killed), but I unfortunately missed MINDELESS MUTANT. Maybe I will get lucky and see them in '07, but I highly doubt it.

CAREER SUICIDE - "Attempted Suicide" LP (Deranged)
Shit man, it just doesn't get any better than this. There is a reason that these guys were in my top ten last year and are on both compilations that I put in my top ten this year. Simply put, they fucking rule! Fast hardcore that blends the perfect combination of hooks, snottiness and aggression. They have put out a shitload of releases over the last few years and I have yet to hear one bad song from them. Hopefully they will keep cranking these flawless releases out.

CARL CORDOVA

Top Ten Records

CROW - "Bloody Tear" LP (Prank)
While most of my top ten isn't in any particular order, CROW's *Bloody Tear* is without a doubt the most listened-to new release of 2006. Sticklers will point out it's official release was on CD a year ago in Japan, but since this is the first time it's seen vinyl, it's taking it's rightful place atop the less worthy nine.

CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
The real gems on this record are found on the B-side. "Anesthesia" and one of my favorite songs of the year "On Goes the Fight" unapologetically borrow from BLITZ, and I love every minute of it. If only skinheads could write an Oi! record that was this good in 2006…

CAREER SUICIDE - "Attempted Suicide" LP (Deranged)
This is the only record I don't own that made it into my top ten, and that's because I've heard the leaked version enough in Filthy Phil's car to know that it fucking smokes. Just when you think this band couldn't get any better, they did.

THE LEFT - "Jesus Loves the Left" CD (Bona Fide)
Keeping this year's top ten restricted to new releases was tough, especially since so many classic hardcore juggernauts got the reissue treatment. I chose to make THE LEFT's Complete Studio Recordings CD an exception not only because they are horribly underappreciated, but also because I have listened to their eight-song *Hell, It's the World* ten more than any other record this year. It's so goddamn good.

SEX VID - "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
The best attempt at VOID…this year.

CLOCKCLEANER - "Nevermind" CD
I listened to this Steve Albini love fest for a month straight after stumbling on one of their live shows in Brooklyn. Aside from hip-hop, this is my favorite non-hardcore release of the year.

A TOUCH OF HYSTERIA - "Demo" 12" EP (Demo Tapes)
The two things I have been listening to a lot of lately both happen to originate from the UK: peace punk and Oi!. While this band definitely falls into the former, the drummer on this demo recording by coincidence also played on the first HARD SKIN record. If you like anything from the MOB, ZOUNDS, or even the SOUTHERN DEATH CULT, you are going to love this. Download it, because the vinyl is *long* gone.

TRAGEDY - "Nerve Damage" LP (Tragedy)
It's TRAGEDY.

DARVOCETS - "Authentic Music From Another Planet" 12" EP (Painkiller)
Cleveland might as well be another planet if keeps on producing bands like the DARVOCETS. Truly authentic late '70s American punk that could have come out on Dangerhouse.

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH - "Street Terrorism" EP (Deranged)
Still one of the best California bands around, and this new crop of songs proves it.

Honorable Mentions:
THE FIX – "At The Speed Of Twisted Thought" LP, SIEGE – "Drop Dead" LP, DEEP WOUND LP, JAY REATARD – "Blood Visions" LP, KORO - LP

WILL KINSER

Top Ten Records

It seems that people are really skeptical of the new bands these days either calling them generic or categorizing every little aspect of each band but there where literally a slew of great records that came out this year as well as some great live bands playing out. I spent three awesome months in Germany last year and was privileged enough to see many great bands who will probably never make it to the States. If I had room to list them all I would, but I'll just say that after some of the best shows and festivals in my life I am positive punk is alive and kicking. It seems a lot of the bands from the first half of the decade have called it quits and now it is time for the new bands to hold the banner high. Touring is a must for these bands. I get bored sitting in my house. I want to see all the action goddamit. So here it is this year's top ten according to me in no specific order really. Oh and uhh, NEW MODEL ARMY was the best band I saw all year and quite possibly in the last five, but they're not punk according to *MRR*…

1. PELIGRO SOCIAL - "No Religion" LP (Tank Crimes/No Options)
Absolutely essential punk rock with Spanish vocals and all the hooks of legendary bands such LA UVI, ESKORBUTO, and TNT. This is a modern classic.

2. HJERTESTOP - "Aarh Fuck! Det Er Hjertestop" EP (Kick N Punch)
Fucking perfect '80s hardcore done with a unique sound and style, yet still remaining 100% punk.

3. POISON IDEA - "Latest Will and Testament" LP (Farewell)
Last record with Tom Pig (RIP), and what a final offering. POISON IDEA were the true kings of punk.

4. STORMCROW / SANCTUM - split LP (No Options)
A crushing powerhouse of a record. Both bands offer up some of the darkest and amazingly bleak songs I've heard in years.

5. PESD -"Politikarepoizonekurva" LP (Prank)
Members of POST REGIMENT and TRAGEDIA create a new sound that has yet to be heard and it isn't fucking metal. This record will challenge your senses and definitely stands out as one of the best records in years.

6. JAY REATARD - "Blood Visions" LP (In the Red)
To phrase it as a friend of mine said, "It sounds like the WIPERS and the ADVERTS fucked."

7. NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS - "Angels of Destruction" EP (Backwards Masking)
Sure it's only two short songs, but damn are they catchy as all hell. NHFTK is one of the best bands going these days.

8. WITCH HUNT – "Blood Red States" LP (Profane Existence)
WITCH HUNT just gets better and better with each record. This proves they are one of the best bands

around these days. Comprehensive and deadly.

9. THE VICIOUS - "Alienated" LP (Feral Ward)
Sure it is retro, but on the second full-length THE VICIOUS really knocks em' dead with rock'n'roll riffs and lyrics of adolescent fury. This is leaps and bounds better than their first LP. I think it is the lyrical content that really adds more depth. This also includes their earlier singles as well.

10. WORLD BURNS TO DEATH - "Totalitarian Sodomy" LP (Hardcore Holocaust)
The new WORLD BURNS TO DEATH full-length is brutal from start to finish, and although I haven't had much of a chance to really listen to it more than a few times I can already tell that this is their defining record. Just pure full on metallic hardcore with all the hooks and drive you could fit on one slab of wax.

Records that rule and that should have made my top ten…
DEADFALL "Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay" EP, OTAN "El Indomable" EP, TOTALITÄR "Vi Ar Eliten" EP, SKITSYSTEM "Stigmata" LP, CROW "Bloody Tear" LP, BOMBENALARM/DEAN DIRG "Split" EP, CAUSTIC CHRIST "Lycanthropy" LP, WARCRY "Deprogram" LP, TREND "Was Dran Liegt EP, TRAGEDY "Nerve Damage" LP, ALL SYSTEMS FAIL "s/t" LP, DEFECT DEFECT "Yeah I'm a Terrorist" EP, LA PIOVRA "Risacca" EP, AMEN 81 "Chorpus Christi" 2XLP, THOUGHT CRIME "It's All in Yer Head" LP.

Reissues of Note

TOREROS AFTER OLE - "Porom Pom Pero" 2XEP
ESKORBUTO - "Mucha Policia, Poca Diversion" picture disc EP
VULPESS - "Me Gusta Ser Una Zorra" Picture disc EP
LA UVI - "Ya Esta Bien" Picture disc EP
A TOUCH OF HYSTERIA - "Demo Tape" LP
CRETINS - "Samin in Darm" 12"
LSD - "83-86" LP
THE FIX - "At the Speed of Twisted Thought…" LP
TDK - "Esto es Una Empresa Capitalista" LP
CRASS - "Demos 1977-79" LP

Top Ten Live Bands

SKITKIDS at K-town fest, Denmark
HJERTESTOP at Lobusche in Hamburg, Germany
THE RESTARTS at AU fest in Frankfurt, Germany
STORMCROW at Gilman Street in Berkeley, USA
SEVERED HEAD OF STATE at some random bar in Philly, USA
WWK at Stortebeker in Hamburg, Germany
ANNIHILATION TIME at AZ in Mulheim, Germany
BOMBENREGN at K-town fest, Denmark
ASSASSINATORS at Rote Flora in Hamburg, Germany
PISSCHRIST at Packebusch, Germany

CHRIS HUBBARD

Top Ten Records

OUT WITH A BANG - "I'm Against It" 12" (Proud To Be Idiot/Vida Loca)
To once again employ an overused phrase, this raging hardcore record grabs you by the chorus of the opening track, and doesn't let go 'til the end of the last song. 100% intensity; *perfect*. And perhaps the best thing—it's one-sided, so lazy sloths like myself don't ever have to get up to flip it.

YOUNG WASTENERS - "Bells" EP (Hjernespind)
Evidently this four-song EP is unpopular among many people who love their *We Got Ways* 12"; to me, it's at least as good (if not better!) than that excellent record, and a very close contender for my #1 spot this year. It's like SACCHARINE TRUST's *Pagan Icons* for the '00s—unnerving vocals, at times discordant (but still memorable) music, and a simultaneous distain for both mainstream and accepted punk standards.

SEX VID - "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
Dirty, noisy, driving hardcore punk, original at a time when most people are busy with sound-alike tributecore. Unfortunately now out of print...

HJERTESTOP - "Aarh, Fuck… Det Er Hjertestop!" EP (Kick 'n' Punch)
And yet another winner from Denmark. What the fuck? How do they do it? Totally catchy, fresh-sounding punk rock, ideal guitar sound, another batch of classic tunes… 100% killer.

TRANZMITORS - "Bigger Houses, Broken Homes/Glamour Girls" (Deranged)
There's something to be said for a Perfect Pop Song. It's impossible to play it in the background; it filters in through your ears, into your brain, and demands your attention. You must listen to it again. And again. It gets stuck in your head for days; you sweat all through work 'til the moment you can get home, drop the needle on the 7", and get your pop fix. Well, THE TRANZMITORS accomplished the feat to which every power-pop band aspires: They wrote a Perfect Pop Song—the A-side to the first (?) of three singles released in 2006. "Bigger Houses, Broken Homes" reminds me of the early CLASH at their most catchy. Buzzing guitars, an anthemic chorus, hooks galore—for sure the best modern power-pop tune since THE EXPLODING HEARTS' "Teenage Faces."

DEEP SLEEP - "You're Screwed" EP (Grave Mistake)
As the early-'80s-informed retro-trend spawns more and more bands with ever-diminishing returns, fewer records catch my ear. DEEP SLEEP's debut nine-song EP, however, is one of those records that stands out from the others. Perhaps the most immediately recognizable elements of their sound are the clean guitar and mid-speed tempo, but DEEP SLEEP puts an inventive twist on this style, with echo-y guitar flourishes and great, punchy drumming—all building on the solid basis of great songwriting. Unfortunately for us all, the band has already called it quits…

THE HELL - "Typical Shit" EP (Pink Pentagram)
I'd never heard of this band when their 7" ended up in my box for review. Pretty cool name, kinda strange cover art—but what does it sound like? I was thrilled to discover an awesome, wild, twisted hardcore trio from Alabama. This five-song EP is an excellent mix of straightforward HC and some slower, weirder stuff. My favorite part of this band is the vocalist—he's got a distinctive, wailing delivery that gives the whole record a desperate, claustrophobic feel. Now, let's hope they haven't gone the way of DEEP SLEEP…

THE VICIOUS - "Obsessive" EP (Feral Ward)
These Swedes get it right (and how!) on their third try.

OUTRAGED - "No Somos Igual" EP (Lengua Armada)
These local heroes made several appearances on vinyl this year, but this is far and away the best of the lot. Unrelenting hardcore thrash with killer hooks, and possibly the Bay Area's most underrated live band?

KIELTOLAKI - "Maailma Menee Helvettiin" EP (Moo Cow)
I usually hate to make comparisons based on geographical similarities, but KIELTOLAKI's debut three-song EP truly recalls the intensity and power of Finland's first wave of hardcore bands. Hits you like a shovel upside the head.

NO SLOGAN - "Obreros Al Poder" EP (A Wrench in the Gears)
Classic-sounding EP from this Chicago band—a solid record with four memorable, melodic-with-an-edge hardcore songs. Also the year's best cover art and layout.

Top Five Reissues

THE WIPERS - "Is This Real?" LP (Fabulous Jackpot)
THE FIX - "At the Speed of Twisted Thought" LP (Touch & Go)
TOREROS AFTER OLE - "Porom Pom Pero" 2x7" (Munster)
LA PESTE - "Better Off La Peste" CD (Dionysis)
A TOUCH OF HYSTERIA - "1983 Demo" 12" (Demo Tapes)

BOB GOLDIE

Top Ten Records

Did you ever get asked the dumb question, "what's your favorite band?" or "what's your top ten albums of all time?" How the hell are you supposed to answer that!? Any self discerning music geek will tell ya that a top ten list of any kind can change daily—it can change within a couple of hours! So for the MRR top ten of 2006, I had a tough time trying to pick out just ten. Another challenge I had to face was in trying not to list a bunch of groups that all pretty much fall into the same category; every band on the list is full on hardcore. Yeah, I liked a lot of other shit that came out last year, but these are my most revered… at least as of this writing. In no particular order:

BLACK SS - "Foreign Object" CD (Reaper)
This is a 12-song album that rages so fast and furious, you feel left out at the end like you've just listened to a short EP. Amazing hardcore from Syracuse, that is nothing like the karate-kicking metal core that the city is known for. Very much influenced by old Boston bands fronted by Choke (LAST RIGHTS, NEGATIVE FX, SLAPSHOT), with good lyrics ranging from political to personal. I can't get enough of these guys. This is coming out on vinyl on Organized Crime.

CONTROL DE ESTADO - "Acto Criminal" EP (Burrito Records)
Hardcore blasts that remind me of good Swedish thrash like TOTALITÄR mixed with the insanity of ASSFACTOR 4. The music is a driving force and the pissed off shouts come out and punch you in the brain. Cool lyrics, which are screamed in Spanish and in English, but not to be compared with CRUDOS (like many people seem to do). This band rages in its own right and has its own sound to stand on. Florida is such a shitty fucking place, but it breeds amazingly authentic brutality like this, so you gotta love it.

DEEP SLEEP - "You're Screwed" EP (Grave Mistake)
I would offer just about any band on this label for a "best of" list, but DEEP SLEEP stand out for having a "punk" edge that reminds me of the great days when hardcore and punk were pretty much one and the same. I'm talking about shit like the ZERO BOYS, WASTED YOUTH, and the CIRCLE JERKS. Here are nine songs of pure hardcore energy and a "hate the world" sentiment that's so easy to relate with. You need to hear this.

GOVERNMENT WARNING - "No Moderation" LP (Feral Ward)
Holy Madre de Dios! This fucking rules. Easily the best hardcore full-length that I've come across in years—I haven't filed this away and I've had it for months! Absolute FU'S, GRONOIDS, early GANG GREEN worship is evident, but who fucking cares! With raging, sonic blasts that reveal harmony at times within the chaos, GOVERNMENT WARNING stands way above the others in this genre. Amazing.

CARDIAC ARREST - "Life's a Dead End" EP (Grave Mistake)
This second EP is just as glorious as their self-titled debut. This is fast, abrasive, shoved-in-your-face hardcore that will put a snarl on your face and make you want to break shit. Even though the band's from St. Louis, you'd swear they originated in the early 80s Boston hardcore scene as the NEGATIVE FX and FU'S influence is clear. Say what you will about too many bands doing this retro 80s kick, but good rock and roll sticks to its roots. This is fucking awesome!

SEX VID - "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
This band rekindled my excitement for new hardcore recently when I saw them play in MRR shitworker Justin's living room (the original venue got flooded). I felt like I was seeing a legendary band in the making. The music was so manic and distorted; I felt it draw me in from the sidelines to join the crowd in shaking fists and dancing along. Very original, yet classic-sounding hardcore in the realm of SSD mixed with VOID, or even the FAITH, this first EP captures them almost as intense as their live performance.

MINDLESS MUTANT - "Without" EP (625)
When I first heard this at the MRR house, I liked it so much that I went on a frantic search for the next several weeks looking for a copy. This is fucking perfect power violence, complete with skull crushing breakdowns and brutal aural blasts of speed and anger. This is all done with huge nods to the almighty INFEST, as well as a bit of DROP DEAD. This kills.

NO SLOGAN - "No Pasaran" EP (A Wrench in the Gears)
Following in the tradition of NAKED RAYGUN, EFFIGIES, and A.O.F., this band carries the torch for the magical Chicago sound done just right. The songs on this EP are fast, tight and catchy, and the obligatory "whoahoa" is done, but not abused. All four songs on this record are high energy and you can't take it off your turntable.

STRUNG UP/ DIRECT CONTROL - split LP (No Way)
Two incredible bands do a split full-length, which is perfect because just one album side leaves you wanting more and it doesn't allow you to get too comfortable while listening. This is why EPs are usually better for hardcore. You should be familiar with these bands by now—both are fantastic 82-inspired hardcore punk with cool lyrics and enough variety to justify an album's worth of material. Great stuff.

NO GOAL - "Demo XXX" EP (Third Party)
Fucking intense, late-'80s style hardcore in the vein of STRAIGHT AHEAD and early JUDGE. This towers over the many '80s youth crew revival bands who fail to capture the spirit of the *great* bands of the era; the ones who were raw, angry, and still had a punk attitude; the NYHC bands that existed before jocks and Christians infiltrated the scene. This EP is essential for all hardcore fans, not just straight edgers.

BLIND JUSTIN

Top Ten Records

2006 was the year every goddamn punk record was advertized as "*Pick Your King*" styled and every guitar player in every band was described as "Ginnesque," and reviewers in these pages and elsewhere ran rampant with that shit. Yawn. PI may be my favorite band of all time but come on… The unoriginality rained down in a flood of biblical proportions yet it seems some punk rock Noahs saved up enough cool ideas in their little punk rock arks to keep me impressed. Though it wasn't until the last few weeks that I even realized how many good records came out this year. I'm also sure my year end top ten will look incredibly similar to all the rest, and chock full of the same records, by the same usual suspects, as everyone else's. Not that there's anything wrong with that. An amazing record is an amazing record. Whatever. So without further adieu, the records that slayed [me] in 2006. In alphabetical order:

CRIMINAL DAMAGE - s/t LP (Feral Ward)
This may be the catchiest record of all time. I'm serious. I also might still be in amazement that this was supposed to be CRIMINAL DAMAGE's frigging demo! The most classic sounding Oi! tunes played by dudes with beards and Crystal. I can't even tell you how many times I've listened to this. I seriously don't know what else to say. The best of the year. If you don't have it get it. Still ain't seen em live yet but hopefully they make it to the Yay Area in the very near future. Family obligations willing. On goes the fight! We can never go back! Don't hate on my red vinyl.

CROW - "Bloody Tear" LP (Prank)
I'll be the first to admit that I've never really been a huge CROW fan but man, once the barrage of feedback that opens up this mammoth of an album lets up, CROW come over the wall, bearing their teeth with one of the catchiest, yet most beastly powerful riffs in modern history. I am won the fuck over. A metallic hardcore fury that only the Japanese can seem to pull off without coming off as cheesy. Fucking awesome!

DEATH TOKEN / KYKLOOPIEN SUKUPUUTTU - split EP (Spild Af Vinyl/Hate)
The KYKLOOPIEN SUKUPUUTTU side of this is another dose of about-to-fall-the-fuck-apart hardcore that, as I look at this list, I'm aparently really into this year. Shredding and different. Also check out their previous 7"s if you get the chance. In fact, If you just so happen to have an extra copy of their first 7" kicking around, hook it up! On the flip, Denmark's DEATH TOKEN continue to woo me with their brand of self-described "Funeral Music for K-Town Hardcore". If you liked last year's *Walking Dead Life* EP, you'll like this too. The last DT track, "Chain of Rules (Chain of Fools)" is the crucial HC jammage jam of 2006. Ugh, I'm sorry that was out of line. I think "Jammage" was also the word of the year around the Maxipad. Kind of embarrasing actually.

FUCKED UP - "Hidden World" 2xLP (Deranged)
The intro to this fucking behemoth still gives me chills. This band is genius there's no denying. Constantly pushing the boundaries and keeping our

boring, record collector, punk world on our toes just wetting ourselves waiting to hear or simply hear about what they'll do next. Cause it may be limited to ten, whatever it is. But can *you* write a 70 plus minute hardcore epic that can keep this punk's ears perked without getting bored? I think not!! Yeah they may manufacture a lot of their own hype, and have turned us all into a bunch of mindless consumers chewing each others legs off to get at their little scraps of treasure, but that's part of the charm and mystery to one truly intelligent band. Unstoppable!

HJERTESTOP - "Aargh, Fuck...Det ar Hjertestop" EP (Kick-n-Punch)
To be completely honest, this record totally reminds me an awful lot of AMDI PETERSEN'S ARME. What's wrong with that you ask? Not a god damn thing!! A great EP.

HOLY SHIT! - "Jazz Phaze" EP (Trigger-on-the-Dutendoo)
This one, me thinks, was just weird enough to fly under most everyone's radar. Plus it is also not obscure enough for the cool-kid-peanut-gallery message board world. The perfect combo of some of the more arty weirdness like FLIPPER or (possibly too obscure a reference... but check this months reviews!) Clevo's NUMBSKULL, and fast thrash of the 1990s variety. Definately picking up the torch dropped by their Wisconsin HC forefathers DIE KREUZEN as far as originally is concerned. If you're not too much of a wussie for something different, pick it up for sure. Don't be a mindless sheep!

KIELTOLAKI - "Maailma Menee Helvettiin" EP (Moo Cow)
I kind of think this record is the perfect example of what a hardcore record should sound like in 2007. What with the influence of all the classic punk/HC styles of the distant and not so distant past, that we have to mine. KIELTOLAKI take just the right amount of the speed and power of a band like SS Decontrol and the typical HC style of their Finnish bretheren and mix up one toxic coctail. Actually it kinda reminds me of AARTILLA in a way. Three tracks. Two faster barn burners on side A and the flip has one slower, Panzer tank slowly creepin over the hill, lurker that just destroys. Killer!

KVOTERINGEN - "Vidrig Maskinell Framfart" EP (Terrotten)
The main reason I came across this Swedish band I was at a show at Gilman and overheard MRR's own Ken Sanderson pick up the *Roffarens Marknad* 7" and say to someone that it was Jallo's (MEANWHILE, TOTALITAR, IRD) new band. Had to get it! This platter spent more time on my turntable than any others this year. Six tracks each of pure Scandi-Beat perfection. Absolutely fucking raging. I hear there's an LP in the works for '07. Hope it's short! Best band I discovered this year.

NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS - "Angels of Destruction" EP (Backwards Masking)
Unfortunately, 2006 only brought us three songs from these boys and this single happens to be two of em. The A side is a reworking of their contribution to the *Kobenhavn I Ruiner* compilation from a couple years back. This version is miles above and beyond the previous one. Total dark, So-Cal, TSOL, AGENT ORANGE inspired greatness. I remember humming along this B side track, "Cold Touch of Death", after their shows in Seattle and PDX in 2004, years before hearing it on record. Another winner.
SEX VID - "Drugging" EP (Kill Test)
Does it really sound like VOID and or DIE KREUZEN? No, not really. Is it totally wild, uncompromising, no frills hardcore, played by really nice folks in tie-dyed shirts? Fuck yes. Were they the best live band I've seen in years? Double Fuck Yes! Can't wait for the next one!

Reissues:
TOREROS AFTER OLÉ - "Porom Pom Pero" 2x7" (Munster)
THE FIX - "Speed Of Twisted Thought" LP (Tough & Go)
KORO - "700 Club" 7" (Sorry State)
HONOR ROLE - "1982" 7" (No Way)
LSD - "Discography" LP (Schizophrenic)
GAUZE - "Fuckheads " LP (bootleg)

ARIEL AWESOME

Top Ten Records

A TOUCH OF HYSTERIA - "1983 Demotape" LP (Demo Tapes)
I keep putting it on over and over, listening a little bit obsessively and in the process making the people around me prematurely sick of this record. But do I care? No. This dark and melodic peace punk, a la ZOUNDS, is fucking addictive, and I cannot get enough. There really is only a handful of bands that I endorse without reservation, and this is one.

RUIDOSA INMUNDICIA - "De Una Vez" EP (Thought Crime)
What was one of my best demo finds of last year is one of the best records of this one. RUIDOSA INMUNDICIA has intensely brutal female vocals over breakneck hardcore, that gets me fucking pumped. I can only imagine they are a sight to behold live, I hope they hit the States one of these days.

GORILLA ANGREB - "Bedre Tider" 12" (Feral Ward)
I didn't want to like it. I really didn't. My first listen I was so pissed that the recording sounded tamer and more polished than the early EPs that I didn't even get through one side. I kept hearing it around, by chance, and it grew on me. I realized that I probably can't not like what they do—the songs are just so fucking catchy and her vocals are so good! Anyone else feel like they know Danish after listening to this enough times?

BORN/DEAD / PELIGRO SOCIAL - split EP (Tank Crimes)
One rippin' song from the well-established Bay Area political hardcore punk ragers BORN/DEAD. and two songs from the new-to-vinyl PELIGRO SOCIAL. BORN/DEAD always manages to put out something good and seething, but the exciting thing about this record was the debut of PELIGRO SOCIAL. They've got that classic '70s punk sound that is hard to shake, snotty Spanish vocals, and some wankery that I'm not sure I like but I'll roll with anyway.

PERIPHERIQUE EST - "Demos" LP (self-released)
So I found this floating around in the demo bin on CD-R, and fucking loved it, totally unaware of the fact that it had a vinyl counterpart being reviewed. Vinyl demo? That's pretty classy. Anyway, it's more late-'70s influenced punk (see RAXOLA from *Bloodstains Across Belgium* for further reading) but undeniably a modern version. Since it's limited, and I'm not particularly cut-throat about getting records I want, I'll make do with my CD-R version for now, but if you want to stoke me out...now you know how.

JAY REATARD - "Blood Visions" LP (In the Red)
Yet another record I didn't want to likel the cover is so dumb—I'm sorry, but it is. All I could think is "baby Andrew WK" when I saw it. But my heart was won with that fuzzed-out guitar and the weird Southern/British/robot accent. ADVERTS, DEVO, BRIAN ENO, and TELESVISION PERSONALITIES, all took turns influencing this record, but Jay really does make it all his own by putting it through the ringer of his Memphis garage sensibilities.

CLOROX GIRLS - "Eva Braun" EP (Burning Sensation)
They have this catchy garage mixed with '80s LA shit fucking down to a science man. Anything you pick up by this band is gold, but I warn you, don't read the lyrics. You'll just be disappointed, or confused, or both

GIANT HAYSTACKS - "A Rebirth of Our City" EP (Pizza! Pizza!)
Sure, the usual comparisons are apt—MINUTEMEN, GANG OF FOUR, WIRE, but I will venture to say that none of those bands are as charming as GIANT HAYSTACKS. This last year I've come to regard them as Oakland's best-kept secret. Before they break up in April, you better get your ass in gear and realize how fucking rad this band is.

DEADFALL - "Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay" EP (Tank Crimes)
'80s-styled gardcore punk as it could only be played today. Also known as "JFA-Y2K!" (I know somebody just thought "oh, no she din't"—but hell yes I did). Sure, there are more than a couple bands on this list playing late-'70s or early-'80s influenced shit, but you know what? There are plenty of bands that didn't make it. The bands I included use their influences well, and make their own sound out of it. That's what I like to hear, and DEADFALL is one of the bands that does this shit well.
DEFECT DEFECT - "Yeah, I'm a Terrorist" EP (Clarence Thomas)
Let's ignore the fact that this band has the driving riffs, the tight beats, and the badass songs for just a moment, okay? They make my year end top ten for having each individual band member's face on the cover of a record that says "yeah, I'm a terrorist" on it. Fuck yes. Too bad I won't be talking to y'all on the phone or be letting you stay at my house anymore, I can't have the feds up in my business too.

BRUCE ROEHRS

Top Ten Records

THE TEMPLARS – "Outremer" CD (GMM)
THE TEMPLARS, the USA's most esteemed skinhead band for fifteen years, released *Outremer* last year. This excellent CD on GMM records has lots of hits, and the lyrics accurately reflect the joys and the frustrations of life in working class America. Two of the songs that leap out and grab you by the throat are: "Frontline" about the uncertainty and terror of fighting in a war and "On the Edge", which encourages men and women to dig inside and find the strength to conquer the problems that almost overwhelm us sometimes. One of the fucking readymade skinhead anthems on this CD is "True to the Cause". This great song is a powerful tale of the beginning of THE TEMPLARS and their loyalty to their fans and their music. "Own Free Will" is a haunting song about people who had opportunities and choices in life, but squandered their fortunes, disgraced their families, and lost all pride in themselves. "Forever Young" is a brilliant saga about keeping the excitement of rock n' roll in your heart for your whole life. *Outremer* is a strong piece of work from start to finish!

REDUCERS SF – "Raise Your Hackles" CD (TKO)
The much-loved San Francisco Bay Area skinhead veterans REDUCERS SF released a stunning new CD in 2006 on TKO Records! The new CD is called *Raise Your Hackles*, and this new skinhead opus fucking floored REDUCERS SF fans old and new! Some ecstatic fans are hailing this REDUCERS SF CD as their best work ever! *Raise Your Hackles* kicks into high gear immediately with "Fading Away", which mines the familiar melodic skinhead turf that REDUCERS SF fans have come to count on. "Who's to Blame" is an up-tempo, melodic, street rock number showcasing the REDUCERS SF at the top of their game! This song gives you a reason to go on even when you're broke and life is a struggle. Song five is a seething rock n' roll masterpiece! "The Night" gives the REDUCERS SF a chance to explore a frightening new dark, deep, rock n' roll power! Amazing! "Carry On" is a song of triumph after all the critics and naysayers have fallen by the wayside! "Hired Hand" and "We Are the Same" are two more reasons REDUCERS SF loyalists are celebrating in 2007!

NUTS AND BOLTS – s/t CD
NUTS AND BOLTS from Oakland, California continued to rock the US skinhead world with their self-titled CD! Jagger rips into the song "Solitude" and you understand that these warriors are here for keeps! "Corruption" is a bitter take on local politics! "Destiny" is quite possibly the most touching love song any skinhead has ever penned! "Down and Out" is always a crowd pleaser! The skins and punks fill the pit for this one! The unchallenged number one NUTS AND BOLTS hammer on this CD is "What I Am!" This song exemplifies all that is proud and strong about the Oakland skinhead scene! This entire CD is first rate!

RAT CITY RIOT – "Dirty Rotten Games" CD
RAT CITY RIOT put out a monster hit CD called *Dirty Rotten Games*. Noah Bricker and his rock n' roll cronies stirred up a major skinhead punk rocker storm with their continuous touring behind this great CD. Songs like "Dirty Rotten Games", "Break Us Down", "Better Off", "Too Much to Prove", and "Reality TV" fucking smash you in the face with 100% real rock n' roll laced with intelligent lyrics. Give the anthem, "Rat City Riot" a spin – fucking raw, unbridled, American rock n' roll for your listening pleasure! Get this CD!

V/A – "Everybody Loves ANTiSEEN" CD
Hold on you fucks! You know 2006 was the year that the various artists, 57-track tribute to ANTISEEN came out! This two-CD extravaganza was entitled *Everybody Loves ANTiSEEN*, and it appears to be true! With the likes of LIMECELL, HAMMERLOCK, TEXAS TERRI BOMB, SIMON STOKES, JEFF DAHL, BUMPIN' UGLIES and forty some more top-flight bands serenading you with ANTiSEEN songs, you are in fucking heaven. Get this ASAP!

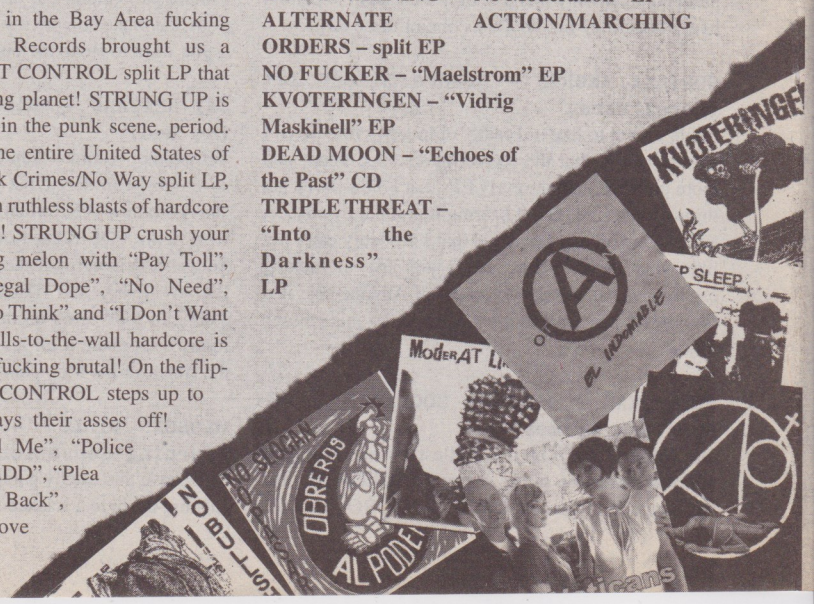
LOWER CLASS BRATS – "The New Seditionaries" CD (TKO)
The fucking LOWER CLASS BRATS brought the motherfucking boom down on you cretins this year! For fourteen years THE BRATS have serenaded you losers at every crummy bar in the United States – now, finally, TKO Records has captured the manic live energy of Bones, Marty and company on vinyl! The 2006 LP/CD is entitled *The New Seditionaries* and this motherfucker rocks like Sister Kate! When these clockwork punks lurch into the title cut, "New Seditionaries", you know that your evening is ruined! THE BRATS are going to drink your beer, fuck your girlfriend, and pogo on your noggin until the cows come home! The long player builds momentum on side A and proceeds to charge ahead like a diseased rhino! Bones is singing harder than ever. Marty is able to showcase his superb guitar work like never before! Flip this bitch over, and side B relinquishes two of the hardest hitting LOWER CLASS BRATS songs ever! "Two in the Heart" smashes right into "Walking Into the Fire" – fuck! Fucking brilliant! One of the best of 2006!

DIRECT CONTROL/STRUNG UP – split LP (Tank Crimes)
In 2006, the local scene in the Bay Area fucking exploded! Tank Crimes Records brought us a STRUNG UP and DIRECT CONTROL split LP that scorched the motherfucking planet! STRUNG UP is one of the premier bands in the punk scene, period. Not just the Bay Area, the entire United States of America! On the new Tank Crimes/No Way split LP, STRUNG UP deliver seven ruthless blasts of hardcore punk with no holds barred! STRUNG UP crush your cerebellum like a fucking melon with "Pay Toll", "Oakland Violence", "Legal Dope", "No Need", "Basket Case", "No time to Think" and "I Don't Want To Be Here". Fucking balls-to-the-wall hardcore is the currency here! Motherfucking brutal! On the flip-side of this LP, DIRECT CONTROL steps up to the plate and fucking plays their asses off! With "Stay Blind", "Kill Me", "Police Threat", "Test Missile", "ADD", "Plea for Peace" and "Give It Back", DIRECT CONTROL prove that they are up to the challenge of playing on the backside of a STRUNG UP hardcore fuselage! This is a fucking brutal strong-as-fuck split LP from start to finish!

DEADFALL – "Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay" EP (Tank Crimes)
Fuck yes! The mighty DEADFALL, also from the San Francisco Bay Area, destroyed many punk brain-pans in the year 2006! Tank Crimes is responsible for the DEADFALL hardcore LP *Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay*, and this fucker rocks! On side "A", DEADFALL bludgeon you with "Counting", "Evacuation Plan" and "Seize the Day". On side "B", cue up "One Man's Dog" and segue right into "It's Okay". This is fucking great punk rock for you undeserving fucks! Get DEADFALL in you life!

DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR – "Friends, Family, Forever" CD (Bridge Nine)
Fucking Boston hardcore maniacs, DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR unleashed a blood-curdling ten-song attack on Bridge Nine in 2006! The *Friends, Family, Forever* CD roughs you up right from the get go with "Born from Misery". This is the brute hardcore power that Boston is famous for! "By My Side" will get you fucks so wound up you will be smashing shit in your living room! Fucking great!! Listen to "Walk Away", "Games Over", and "Dead to Me". This rough-hewn hardcore will influence your approach to life! Get DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR's *Friends, Family, Forever* CD. Contact Bridge Nine at Bridge9.com.

Roehrs 2006 Constant Rotation:
MAX R&R – "Horns Up" CD
CRIMINAL DAMAGE – s/t CD
WOUND UP – "Fuck Fashion" EP
UPSTAB – EP
STRAIGHT TO HELL – LP
SKIN DISORDER – "Scars & Stripes" EP
HELLSHOCK – "Shadows of Underworld" LP
BONECRUSHER/OXYMORON – split EP
TERMINAL STATE – "Panic Attack" EP
ANNIHILATION TIME – "Cosmic Unconsciousness" EP
BORN DEAD/PELIGRO SOCIAL – split EP
CARDIAC ARREST – "Life's A Dead End" EP
LBAL – "Street Terrorism" EP
FOR THE WORSE – "Couldn't Give Two Shits"
FUCKED UP – "Dangerous Fumes" EP
VICTIMS – "Divide & Conquer" LP
GOV'T WARNING – "No Moderation" LP
ALTERNATE ACTION/MARCHING ORDERS – split EP
NO FUCKER – "Maelstrom" EP
KVOTERINGEN – "Vidrig Maskinell" EP
DEAD MOON – "Echoes of the Past" CD
TRIPLE THREAT – "Into the Darkness" LP



SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN*

Rising from the ashes of Israeli hardcore bands Nekhei Naatza and Dir Yassin comes Smartut Kahol Lavan. With an equally incendiary political and musical approach, though with many important differences as well, SKL recently released their debut EP on Lengua Armada records (the CD of which was released some time before) and contributed a song to the recent Maximum Rocknroll compilation LP. Obviously, existing as a political hardcore band in Israel leads to a different experience of punk than bands in most Western European countries or the United States. The following interview was conducted with Federico of SKL about the band, Israeli politics, the relevance (and irrelevance) of punk music and lyrics, and living under the long shadow of the occupation. Interview by Filip Fuchs. Originally printed in Czech in Hlubouka Orba fanzine

MRR: While most of hardcore/punk bands that sing about war conflicts know war only from TV or from history class at school, for bands in Israel it is quite different. How does the Israel-Palestine conflict influence the daily life of average citizen in your country and how does it influence the punks or punk scene in general in Israel?

Personally, the first Intifada created for me (a kid who emigrated to Israel from another country, Argentina) a sense of discomfort at first, which soon turned to anger. It was around that same time, in the late '80s, when I discovered punk. Punk became the first and main channel in which to express protest and rage against the brutal repression Israelis committed against Palestinians. I don't think it could have been any other way for me, but sadly that was not the case for most "punks" at the time, as it is not the case with most of the "punks" nowadays, almost twenty years later, even though things have improved. For example, many of the most significant direct actions done by Israeli citizens against the occupation of Palestine were organized or had involved people from the punk scene or somehow connected to it. Israeli punk also became an important medium for young people to express anti-Zionist views, even though in real numbers we are still talking about some dozens at best.

MRR: I know that there's compulsory military service for every Israeli citizen (I think for men it's for three years and for women it's two years, right?) with no possibility to serve for an alternative type of civil service. How did you deal with it?

It was so long ago, things have changed a lot since then (I think mostly for the worst), but basically, I convinced them that I was not capable of benefiting the army in any way and that it is pretty likely that the army will do to me some kind of psychological harm that they would have to be responsible for.

MRR: One of the things on the endless lists of strange things I can think of which may happen in militarized countries in the middle of violent conflict is a hysterical reaction towards any voices of dissent. Even if this dissent comes from relatively harmless punk bands, right? I know that some your previous bands had problems with the media and also with secret police because of your lyrics. I have read a little about problems Nekhei Naatza's and KLSLL had. Can you talk more about these two cases? What about your other bands or other Israeli punk bands in general, were there similar annoyances from the press or from police?

Nekhei Naatza, which we started while still in high school in 1990 and broke up in 1997, was only part of our activities, some of which got the attention of the Israeli secret police (Shavak) and therefore, we were interrogated several times. Of course, it is nothing compared to what any Palestinian has to go through during one day of their life, and I'm mentioning it just so people abroad will have the right perspective. Similar things happened with Dir Yassin, which got even more attention due to the controversial name, but again, there were threats against us but no charges were ever made and we never had to do time for any of our beliefs. I would say that concerning dissidence within Israeli society, at least from the 1990s onwards, the policy of the different governments was to keep an eye on what is being done, but not to try and physically stop it. With Smartut Kahol Lavan I have been the closest to getting sent to court (accused of sedition), since in a benefit show for the "Anarchists Against the Wall," I supposedly called for the assassination of Israeli soldiers and ex-prime minister Ehud Barak. That part, filmed secretly by people from a right-wing organization supporting the construction of the apartheid wall, was shown on prime time TV, and was obviously part of a maneuver to discredit and demonize protesters against the inhumane policy of the Israeli government. Despite the fact that a politician from the regime said that charges of sedition would be pressed against the band and my being interrogated by the Tel Aviv Jaffa police department twice, nothing came out of it. I actually really regretted saying those things, not because I'm totally opposed to them (although they were said in an sarcastic way) but because it somehow slightly damaged efforts of many people engaged in the struggle.

MRR: Give us a short history of Smartut Kahol Lavan. I know that your previous band's name, Dir Yassin came from the name of Arab village that was massacred back in 1948 by Zionist armed forces that later became official Israeli army. Is there any similar meaning behind SKL?

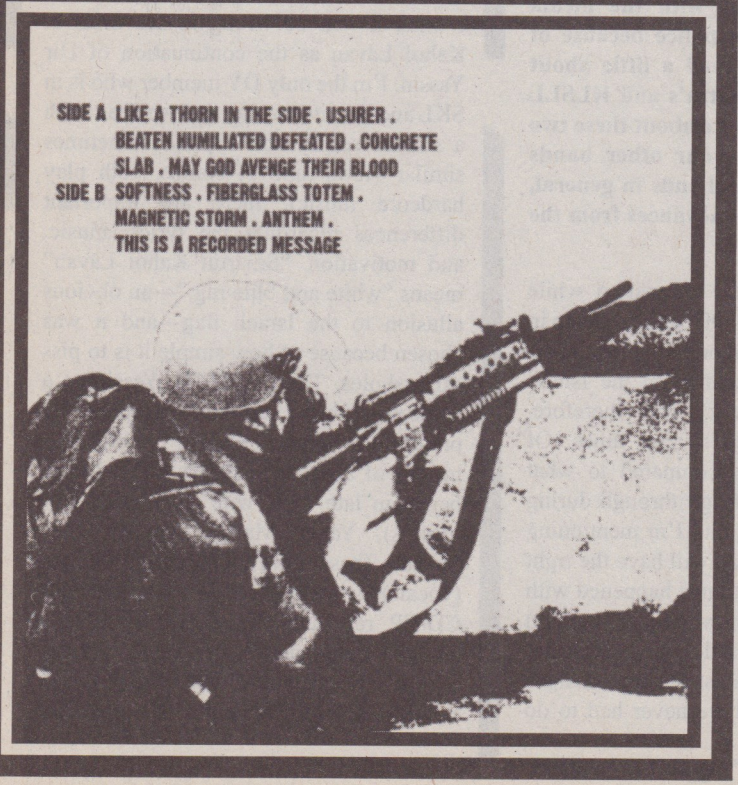
I think it will be wrong to see Smartut Kahol Lavan as the continuation of Dir Yassin. I'm the only DY member who is in SKL and despite the fact that we dealt with a similar reality and express sometimes similar views (and of course, both play hardcore music), there are important differences regarding the lyrics, music, and motivation. "Smartut Kahol Lavan" means "white and blue rag,"—an obvious allusion to the Israeli flag—and it was chosen because of how simple it is to piss off assholes. The use of Dir Yassin as a name was to bring attention to a topic many preferred to ignore or twist: the bloodied history of Zionism. Smartut Kahol Lavan began in late 2002 with Yonni Ben Dor (drums), Yaniv Maizel (guitar), Guy Shaham (bass), and me Federico Gomez (vocals). In June 2003 we recorded our CD-EP, released a year later by Boshet and two years later by Lengua Armada as a 7" EP. In September 2005 we recorded the *Spontaneous Violence* CD, released

by Boshet some months later. We played several shows in Israel with bands such as Nikmat Olalim, The Astroglides, Brutal Assault, Vaadat Kishut, Ha'Yehudonim, Monkey Son of a Donkey, Barbara, Hikokiri, D9 & Asura, and with some of the visiting bands like Makiladoras (Holland) and Kommissar X (Germany).

MRR: I think it would be very interesting to hear about the other bands you were or still are in, so please write more about each your band (history, releases, tours, achievements, downfalls etc.).

Before Nekhei Naatza, I was in some high school new wave rock bands that didn't do much. With Nekhei Naatza we released an LP (1997), two 7"s (the first in 1994 and the second in 2002). The second one, even though recorded in 1997, was only released posthumously and it is the only available NN release (if interested, please write to the label that released it, Tofu Guerrilla www.tofu-g.net.ms). We also had two split tapes (in 1993 and 1997) and appeared on several compilations. In the summer of 1997 we toured the USA along with another Israeli hardcore band called USF that for sometime I played bass for. USF also had a NN member and their drummer would later on play in Dir Yassin for the first two 7"'s. I think that was a great achievement, being the first Israeli hardcore-punk band to tour abroad—the melodic hardcore band Useless ID were actually the first to play in the US, but they did not really tour until a year later. We were also the first to release vinyl, at least since garage rocker Rami Fortis' "punk" album was released in 1979. We were the first band to form from the early '90s wave of local punk and hardcore bands such as Kuku Bloff, Sartan Ha'shad, Public Domain, Mefageret, and Anus and it was a great feeling being involved in the creation of the Israeli scene, especially when we started to organize our own shows in the "Left Bank" Club in Tel Aviv from 1996 onwards. Many punk shows still take place there. The bad thing about NN were the line up problems, which paralyzed us for the better part of 1994 and 1995. And the recordings did not turn out that good, the first EP sounds especially bad, but we didn't had the money for something better and even when we tried, the studio people were horrible. Still, the LP got very good reviews in zines like *MRR* and the lyrics and the essays in different releases were right on.

Then I was in Dir Yassin, from 1997 until 2002. We released three 7"'s in 1999, 2001, and 2003 (they are all compiled in an LP released by Tofu Guerrilla and Alerta Antifascista www.no-pasaran.org), a demo cassette and a CD-R (both from 1998) and various compilations worldwide. We toured in Europe twice, first in 1999 (Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Czech, Belgium) and then in 2002 (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Germany). With Dir Yassin we succeeded in politicizing part of the scene, even though the results began to be seen some years later on and at the time we were pretty disappointed by the response inside Israel. We also suffered from line up problems and barely did things after 2000. Touring was great, we got to meet a lot of cool people and interesting places all over Western Europe and the response to us was really great, especially during the first tour, especially keeping in mind that nobody had previously heard us. Our debut 7" was released just as the tour started. I'm pleased with all the releases we did, musically, lyrically and aesthetically.



In 2000 we had a short-lived band called Anarkomanim, with people from Nekehi Naatza, Dir Yassin, USF and The Astroglides (who only released a demo). In 2003 I was also in a short-lived band called Fearful Soon To Follow along with Adi (the other singer in Dir Yassin), Linda (an Irish woman, that's the reason our lyrics were in English and Gaelic), and another guy who was the brother of the Dir Yassin drummer. We only played a couple of shows and released a seven-song demo, which I think was pretty good.

MRR: What about the history of hardcore/punk in Israel? Who were the first bands, how was it back then in '80s? Are there any vinyl rarities from old Israeli punk bands on eBay? Hahaha.

In Israel, there have been people into punk since 1977, but besides the *Plonter* LP by Rami Fortis I mentioned earlier, there is not much to talk about until the 1990s, besides probably Noon Mem, who were definitely an influence on Nekhei Naatza even though they only released a demo and played few shows. The singer later on started Nisrefet, a great and overlooked noise-rock band. There were maybe a couple more punk bands in the eighties, like Cholera (with members starting later on pulverizing hardcore, grind, and noise bands like Barbara and Cadaver Eyes), Dead Begins & ex-Tinok but they didn't release anything so they did not quite make an impact. There was quite an active underground scene in the '80s that personally influenced me, but it was more of a cold/wave/industrial/goth one. A punk scene, in the real sense of the word, only started around 1992. As for record collecting, well, you can probably get all the Israeli punk vinyl without spending much since there are very few releases and none of them really rare, unless you include the aforementioned Israeli underground music (the Duralex Sedlex 12" from 1985—an industrial band from Tel Aviv and probably the best slice of vinyl ever pressed here—is rare and hard to find). Actually, I used to be some sort of record collector (I don't have the money I used to have back in the '90s), but it is funny to see how record collecting actually benefits bands nowadays, in these days of downloading from internet, bands can cover at least their recordings by selling limited edition records, which non-collectors get for free from the internet. I think it is a good deal and that may lead

to more experimentation with packaging, being more rewarding and interesting and challenging to collectors, bands, and labels.

MRR: In recent few years there are more and more bands from Israel touring Europe, just in Czech we have seen bands like Soon In Here, Brutal Polka, Vadaat Kishut, and few more, is there any chance for an SKL tour? I think that Dir Yassin, back in 1999, was probably the first Israeli band to tour Europe. How did it go? Wasn't it kind of culture shock? I mean, not the general society, but the hardcore punk scene itself, which I suppose looks quite different from an Israeli perspective. I know that sometimes you did kind of "lectures" about Israeli punk scene and the war conflict in general. How was the response?

Dir Yassin was the second Israeli punk band to play in Europe (Useless ID toured Germany some weeks before us) and the first to tour it, playing about thirty shows in about five weeks. For us it was neither the first time abroad nor the first contact with the European scene, so the culture shock was relatively minor, but the way people usually treated us was really incredibly good and unforgettable. We owe a lot to a lot of people in all the countries we played. The idea of the "lectures" (suggested by Ilja Satanowsky from Berlin, who organized our tour) was to talk and discuss politics and other aspects of Israel and to develop from what we said onstage and the flyers we gave to those who attended the shows. Sometimes they were problems. The one who in Amsterdam was, surprise-surprise, continuously interrupted by drunken punk idiots, so we made another one in a squat a day later and managed to get our say and to discuss with others. The people who came to them, more than we expected (in some cases, more than to some of the shows) seemed interested, asked questions and were not afraid of debating.

MRR: I think that it is not just the general public in Europe who have sometimes very distorted view about situation in your country, but many people in these so-called "radical political circles" or punk scene as well often too quickly choose sides without deeper thought. There are bands (especially in rich Western Europe countries) maybe too blindly supporting all aspects of Palestinian struggle without any criticism, while there are people waving Israeli state flags on anti-Nazi demonstrations, so I think it's very interesting to hear an opinion from punk band coming straight from Israel. That's why I ask so many questions you may already heard many times before and that are probably already tiring for you. How do you feel about the Western political activists' and punks' opinions about the conflict in your country?

Most of the Western media, especially in the US is totally pro-Israeli, and most of their governments maintain a "pro-peace" stance, which is no more than Orwellian newspeak for letting Israel do what they want as long as they often shake hands with representatives of the Palestinian authority. That's one side of the coin, and I would say, also the most important, but looking on the way the conflict is seen and handled by anarchists or radicals or leftists especially in the West, I cannot avoid the feeling that the Israeli-Palestinian "conflict" seems to be an easy target which, in general, allows them to maintain a simplistic view of politics in the Middle East specifically and in the world in general. I find myself wondering how people who supposedly despise nationalism and religion seem to feel outraged when people are oppressed by a different nation (in this case, Palestinians/Arabs by Israelis/Jews) but are less outspoken when "their own people" commit the murders. Many more Iraqis were killed by other Iraqis since the US invasion and occupation of Iraq than Palestinians by Israelis during the last Intifada. The number of Palestine victims pale in comparison of the amount of Algerians killed by other Algerians in the last decade or so, and I can continue and bring more such examples. Of course, comparing death tolls cannot be an excuse for any murder and only cynical bastards like spokespersons for the Israeli government will somehow try to justify the apartheid and endless injustices suffered by Palestinians by highlighting other atrocities. Yet still, such issues seem to hardly interest anarchists and other radicals despite their magnitude, and I cannot help wondering why. I know that for many, even Israelis like us would be seen and treated as "guilty until proven innocent" if not just guilty, but they would kiss the ass of most Americans despite the fact that their country is accountable for many more murders than those committed by Israel. I'm not trying to imply that most Israelis are okay and it's the government that stinks. The vast majority of the Israeli

public are moderate racists at best (and in most cases, supporters and responsible for murders and injustice), but maybe I'm expecting too much for people to judge others by what they say or do and to try to find out about that than just sticking to their superficial and crude political beliefs.

MRR: Honestly when I heard about the Dir Yassin tour I just was not very interested because I was afraid that you would play some kind of experimental music (sorry for this prejudice, but at least back in '90s this was often the case with many bands from "exotic" places) and my musical taste is very narrow, haha... So I missed you when you played in Czech. I was really shocked when I finally got a chance to hear your music and found out that you play ripping hardcore influenced by early US hardcore bands! Would you agree with this description? I think that SKL's sound is also almost the same, so maybe you can tell more about your musical influences?

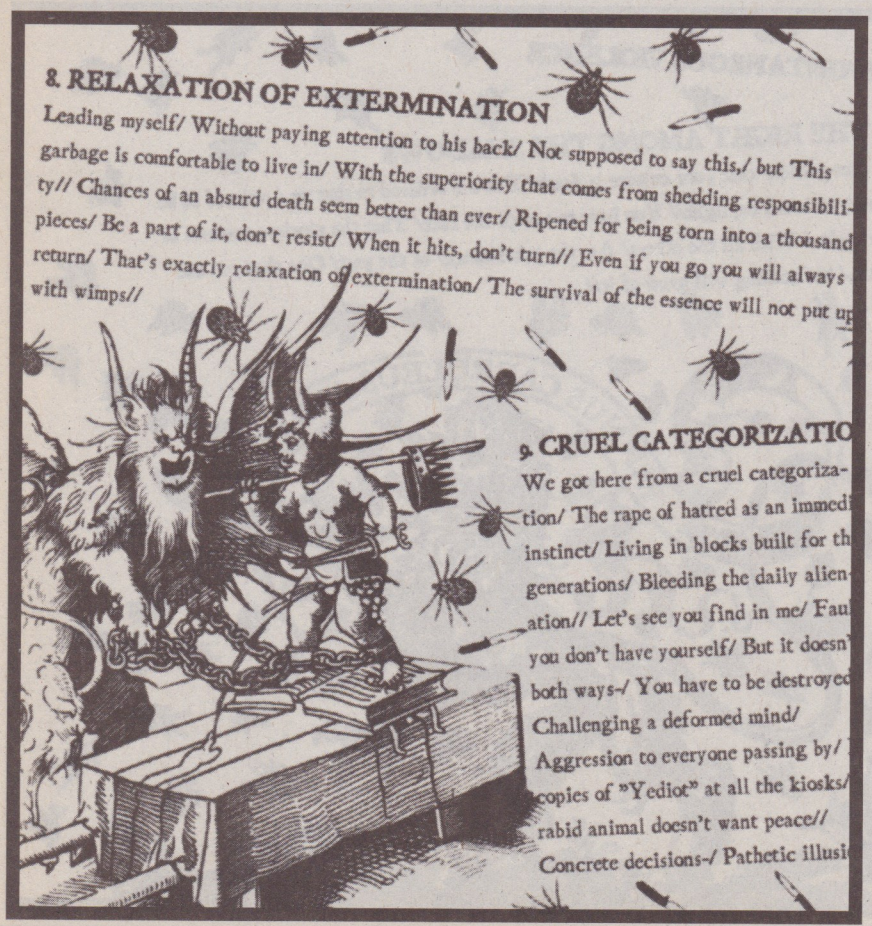
Well, maybe you didn't missed so much after all. Yeah, we got across some people who were surprised that we're from Israel and played that kind of music, I cannot blame them (and you) though, and back then it was also harder to check out things like that. There were also not so many people into all that stuff as there are now. Fuck, nobody but us and a handful of our friends was listening to stuff like that then. Even though I'm also a big fan of early punk (and also like other types of music), I would say that yes, early US hardcore (and late '80s youth crew) was one of the main influences, along with early to mid '80s European bands like BGK, Rattus, Mob 47, Raw Power, CCM, Ripcord, etc. and then newer stuff like Los Crudos, Drop Dead, Asshole Parade, 97a, Rorschach, Crossed Out, Manliftingbanner, and many more. As for SKL, I think our sound and approach sometime reminds me of Indigesti circa *Osservati Dall'Inganno*, or *Endless Struggle* era Offenders or 76% Uncertain's *Estimated Monkey Time*, but I don't think any of the others are as big a fan of those LPs as I am, so there is no deliberate attempt to copy any of those great bands (not that we could succeed) and I guess it may sound pretty different to other people. Unlike many other bands which their only non-hardcore punk influences seem to be metal, maybe we actually do listen to diverse and "non-orthodox" stuff, it shows in the new CD more than in the 7". I like the tension created by playing a musical genre with is relatively limited but still trying to figure out where the borders are, without having the temptation to either play it safe and to be a trendy or "revivalist" band also not to "mature."

MRR: Do you remember the Dir Yassin gig in Czech? How many gigs did you play here? Do you have any good, bad, or special memories?

We actually played three shows in the Czech Republic, together with German band Crude BE, one in Prague, one in Roznov and one in a city I can't remember the name of (it was about two to three hour drive from Prague, we just played and came back to Prague—could be Usti). The one in Roznov was one of the greatest. We were playing inside this garage and the people were really close to us, but outside. They also served us a great meal and a guy just gave us his house so we could all sleep. Then things got uglier: not only did the van break down (but we managed somehow to fix it), but I also found out that a person very close to me was dying in Israel. I had to go back, and the other two shows in Czech I still went on and played but I was mostly waiting and thinking about going back. The show in Prague was at that famous squat in the park (it used to be a military base before I think) where we also stayed and the people there were really nice. Our show was so so I guess, besides Crude BE there was also this sword-eating guy, which I think was some kind of celebrity in underground circles. Also the same day we played, while looking for this vegan restaurant, we found out it was something like a national day or something, where a traditional clash between nazi skinheads and anarchists and other radicals take place, and we probably were in the "wrong side of town" since twenty or so nazi skinheads began chasing us but, surprisingly, gave up on us as their train came. I don't have many memories of the other show, besides the fact that there were lots of soldiers and "gangster" types outside looking to fight each other.

MRR: I know that you were involved in the organization of few foreign band tours through Israel (specifically Code 13 and Y). How did it go? Is it difficult for foreign DIY punk band to tour your country? What about dealing customs and police, places to play, general support of people, money etc.?

I was involved in that. Those were the first attempts to bring foreign bands over on a grassroots level while covering the costs. That was achieved with Code 13 and but not with Y, since the time they chose for coming was problematic. Both bands were really cool and fun to work with and I hope they had



an interesting experience, but personally, I probably wouldn't bring a Western band to Israel again, unless some sort of "tour exchange" was in the works. They can come if they want, if things work good, they can earn the money for their flights back (and maybe more) if not, so what, they just had a paid a vacation, playing for kids in a different land and doing things a tourist trip could never offer.

The whole way a big part of the scene works by just reproducing capitalism and imperialism, only that this time those imported goods, the bands, are supposedly against those practices. Many bands from "exotic" countries can easily, musically speaking, kick the ass of more trendy Western ones, but nobody will ever think about helping them out in organizing a tour. Another significant aspect of the imperialistic and globalizing (in the bad sense of the word) trends in hardcore are the non Anglo-Saxon bands that choose to sing in English, and usually the same tired rebellious clichés. One of the reasons hardcore and punk seemed to go dull and expectable is the gradual disappearance of local contents and motives and we're left with four or five prototypes (crust, straightedge, metal core, melodic hardcore, and street punk, with seasonal name altering), where from the fonts used by the band up till the last power chord, everything could be predicted beforehand. I'm not looking back nostalgically to the "golden age of hardcore," and I would be a liar if I say that I don't enjoy the sounds of many "revivalist" bands, but things could be easily better. I really liked the direction of a band like Fucked Up on *Looking for Gold*, showing possibilities without giving up the abrasive, direct and powerful character of hardcore. If somebody would say something similar about the SKL full length, that would be the most cherished compliment.

MRR: Have you seen the famous *Munich* movie? If so, what do you think about it?

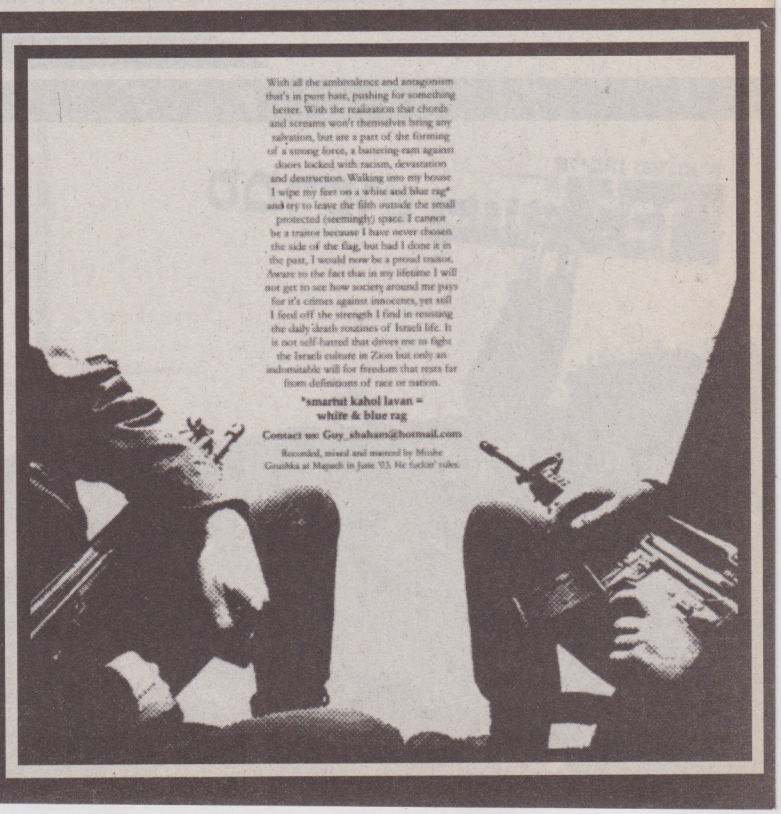
I saw the movie not long after it was released, and since I never read the book it was based upon, I was surprised for its relatively critical tone towards Israel. Even the most "liberal" Jewish people involved in the media, especially in the level of Spielberg, are really careful (at best) if they dare at all to deal with any aspect of Israel or Zionism. The movie was widely criticized in Israel for "twisting the facts." Of course, most Israelis prefer a movie like Spielberg's *Schindler List*, where Jews are mostly the victims—a narrative that goes from Hitler to Arafat will always be more pleasant to the eye.

MRR: I know that Israel/Palestine conflict is such difficult issue that it simply can not be explained in one interview, but as Dir Yassin wrote in the booklet of discography LP "We totally support the Palestinian struggle against the brutal military might unleashed upon them by the state of Israel. We feel that a terror they have enforced to live for decades is the main issue people in our area should fight against. To put it on positive terms: we need to help the Palestinian struggle in trying to achieve peace." I can understand this opinion, but is there any space left for Israeli people if Palestinians do achieve their goal? I think that the goal for most of them (at least the political goal of Hammas who won the last election in Palestinian territories few months ago) is the complete destruction of Israel. Is there any way out of this endless conflict?

One of the biggest accomplishments of the Israel government (as of the US and of many Palestine as well) is to portray the Palestinians as dogmatic religious zealots unwilling to compromise. From my conversation with Palestinians, I can easily assume that most understand that Israelis aren't going to disappear, so the only possible solution will be one that internalizes this fact, and that does not mean that they will have to accept the crumbs that the Israeli governments have been offering them. I don't think that the majority of the Hammas voters are religious fanatics and that the vote for them can also be interpreted as a desire for a less corrupt type of politics, ones that are different than those used by the PA since the 1993 Oslo agreements.

MRR: While I am definitely not some Jew-hating paranoid fool, sometimes I strongly feel that how most mass media in Czech or Western Europe in general (it's even more obvious in the US) only inform about the conflict in a very one-sided and dishonest way. Often they seem to be strongly pro-Israel and it seems that the Israeli state pushes its agenda very hard on mass media all around the world, while Palestinians don't have this kind of power. Maybe that's also the presence of some strong pro-Israeli lobby has something to do with it. Do you have something more to add? Maybe you know more about this topic?

For several historical reasons that had to do with the possibilities given to Jews and their limitations, a relatively large amount of them ended up in positions of power, especially in counties like the US, where many moved during the 19th and 20th century. That fact has been used for people from many different sides in the political spectrum to fantasize about either a Jewish "genius" or about some kind of conspiracy, but besides the fact that the majority of these Jews tend to support Israel despite whichever sick policy the Israeli government may be engaged in, the reason Israel manages to get away with what it does also got to do with both geopolitical interests of the US (and, therefore, most of the West) and even pretty wacky Christian messianic views, with pressure groups more powerful than the (in)famous "Jewish lobby."



Despite the similarities between Israel and Apartheid South Africa (which, by the way, was one of Israel's closest allies with people like "moderate" and Nobel peace prize awarded Shimon Peres and Itzhak Rabin praising its merits), almost no politician or strong, influential body will regard Israel in the same way. The emphasis on the reports about Israel in the Western media seem to be usually on the religious/irrational violence and not on the much larger and significant planned policies of repression and occupation, paid and subsidized by their governments.

MRR: While Dir Yassin's lyrics were strongly political, I would say even "educational" often using actual names and terms from Israel's history or current politics, I think that SKL's lyrics are more personal and while they are still angry, I feel more bitterness and cynicism in them. Do you think that's accurate? Do you feel jaded and beaten down after years of trying and not achieving too much?

In a way, you are right, they are political in very different ways and I think that in many places, anger made room for bitterness, but also it is important for me to say that with Dir Yassin, we were never so naïve to think that a band can destroy the occupation and we were realistic about the goals such a project can achieve. The fact that groups like "Anarchists Against the Walls" began without precedent in the history of the Israeli "radical left" in the scale and amount of direct actions, as well as the motivation of its participants, with many of those involved coming from the scene created by Dir Yassin, stands as proof that also on this level, we achieved something. I think that with Smartut Kahol Lavan's lyrics, as well as the music, I didn't wanted it to be a continuation of Dir Yassin, and luckily none of the other members would have liked it to be so either. I think the lyrics of SKL will be harder to understand outside Israel, even though we still provide English translations, but I think they are still more relevant than the stupid clichés sung by 99.9% of punk bands in the West.

MRR: In the booklet of the Dir Yassin LP there's a commentary, which goes like this "We tried to communicate through music, but we found only a few people on Israeli side who held the same views and nobody on Palestinian side, as punk rock for the most part belongs to the privileged." Another interesting commentary from the record reads, "Sometimes people with supposedly libertarian hopes can become so sectarian and negative delirious that they don't realize that if their ideas would be applied to reality, the society created would be a nightmare." I know that some of you decided to leave Israeli to Western Europe, so were these some of the reasons for it, the failed attempts to create some kind of political punk scene in your country? What were some of the most difficult situations you faced when trying?

Of the original members of Dir Yassin, four out of the five are currently living abroad on a temporary or more permanent basis. Through the end of Dir Yassin I moved to Sweden for a while, then went back to Israel, started SKL and now I am again in Sweden. Hard for me to say exactly for how long, in any case, I guess that for many of those who see themselves as anti-Zionist, living in Israel creates a lot of anger and guilt and they start moving out and in and out in an almost pendulum fashion. Even for most activist people, who in a way can more easily justify their life in Israel, the contradictions that arise by working with many Palestinians who ethically may be as far from them as an Israeli soldier, are not easy to overcome. For me, moving out had to do with considerations beyond the scene and even the political situation—relationship, studies, and work. I think that a "scene" that encourages exchange of information, opinions, and cultural production based on different and even antithetical considerations than those pushed by mainstream society is something worth working for, but knowing that I will sound like the old asshole that I am, it is hard for me to relate with the motivations, values and aspirations of most of the Israeli punks. I know it is also hard to please relatively old persons like me, since going to see my friends rehearse onstage, playing the same expectable chords and doing the same banal cover versions of long gone bands (a typical Israeli punk show) have been experienced by me since the late '80s. Of course, I'm not minimizing the empowering experience for those engaged in it.

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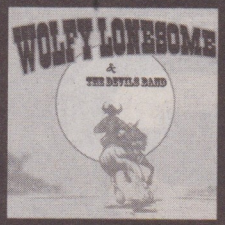

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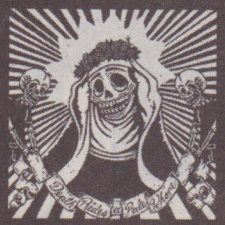

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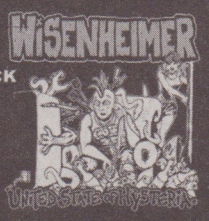

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ELECTRIC KISSES

A few years ago, Erin Yanke reviewed a demo by Seattle's Electric Kisses, cut with their then drummer Heidi. September 5th, 2006 saw the release of the proper debut by. Band mainstays/sweethearts Mike Frame and Sarah Brooking sat down to discuss the band and its release on Full Breach Kicks. Hurry up and buy this so Mike and Sarah can sign to a major and we can all start slagging them as sellouts! Interview by Scott Stalcup

MRR: Okay, name and instrument.
Sarah: Sarah. Bass and singing.
Mike: Mike. Guitar and singing.

MRR: Can you state your band history for anyone too lazy to log on to the site?
Mike: Sarah and I started out playing together in our apartment in the fall of 2001. I had never played guitar before and Sarah had never played bass. We had to play through the same bass amp due to lack of equipment, which continued through the first five or six gigs we did as well. It had a pretty cool sound and I decided I really liked the clean guitar tone so I kept it once I got my own amp. From my point of view I wanted the songs to be mid-tempo and clean sounding versus all the "Marshall cranked to 11" stuff happening around us. Sarah started writing great songs as soon as she started playing bass and I was writing mid-tempo stuff instead of the minute and a half snotty punk stuff I had been writing (and still love). We have gone through a few drummers over the years, all of which helped to shape our sound in some cool way. We have also spent a lot of time learning to make the best use of what we have vocally. If you are not a great singer you have to learn to use what you do have to the best of your abilities. We really dig the trio format in terms of ease of practicing and operating so we've got to sing as well as we can with what we've got.
Sarah: I think Mike pretty much got it. And four drummers later, here we are!

MRR: Who are your influences?
Mike: The big ones for me are the Ramones, AC/DC, and the Rolling Stones. For less blatantly obvious picks, the big ones would be Jeff Dahl, Fastbacks, Muffs, New York Dolls, Real Kids, Black Crowes, Georgia Satellites/Dan Baird, Zero Boys, Sleater Kinney, and Steve Earle. I would also single out Joan Jett in particular as being a huge musical and personal influence on me. I can think of no one who is more badass and amazing. All her records are killer and she is probably as responsible as anyone for all my aesthetic and musical tastes. Her new record *Sinner* is killer and her last one *Pure And Simple* was one of the very best records of the '90s. She rocks all!
Sarah: Mike and I obviously share a lot of the same tastes and influences. The Ramones are a huge influence for me. Also a lot of newer bands like the Soviettes. I love their trade-off vocals and high energy. The Real Kids, the Saints, Bangs, Loli and the Chones. Also the Modernettes, who were from Vancouver BC's early punk scene, have also been a real big deal for me.

MRR: What's your stance on the MySpace controversy. Does it hurt punk? Does it help? Is it as much a tool for good or ill as a kitchen knife?
Mike: It seems like the people who are making a fuss about it all have MySpace pages. The Rupert Murdoch ownership is creepy but until these whiny motherfuckers stop sucking in the Simpsons every Sunday night I can't take them seriously. I feel a little strange about it, but at this point it seems like it is doing more good than harm, at least from a band perspective. The personal page side of it does not appeal to me at all, but I like that bands from all over the world can put their music up and get heard and meet up with like minded folks. Seems cool so far, but it is bound to get ruined. I think that it can be used as just a tool as you say, just like ProTools or anything else. It is not the technology but the dipshits who use it.
Sarah: I agree. It's definitely a helpful tool. If anything, it's making the punk world smaller, which I think is a good thing. I mean, how else is a band from Norway going to get a hold of our songs, and vice versa? On the other hand, the Fox News Network connection is real creepy and something I have to deal with every time I log on.

MRR: The Pacific Northwest is and has been since the early '60s a hotbed of musical talent. Do you worry though about what happened in the late '80s to early '90s occurring again?
Mike: I wasn't here when the big boom went on so I am not sure what that was like or too concerned about it happening again. Seems like everything is too much of a niche these days to really have a focused explosion like that again anyway. I definitely feel like there have been so many great bands from the Northwest and that was definitely a huge part of wanting to live here. From the Sonics, to Fastbacks, Dead Moon, Head, and so on there is a great and rich history up here. There are still a ton of great bands as well. We love: Ape City R & B, The

Suspicions, Earaches, Diskords, Four Easy Pieces, Savage Lucy, The Invisible Eyes, Nice Boys, Mexican Blackbirds, Valentine Killers, and The Boss Martians to name just a few. Some great rocknroll and punk in the Northwest.
Sarah: Yeah, I'm not too worried either. The whole feeling and vibe of the area has changed so much since then. I don't think anything on that scale could ever happen again.

MRR: You're on a label in the Midwest. Any feelings on that?
Mike: I really like it. I think a lot of the best punk bands have been from the Midwest since day one, like Zero Boys, Screeching Weasel, Pegboy, Trash Brats, Vindictives, Rocket From The Tombs, Sloppy Seconds, and, yes, the goddamn Gizmos all come immediately to mind. I think a lot of great bands, labels, and small scenes thrive when they are out of the limelight a little bit. Currently, the Paybacks, Soviettes, Obsoletes, MOTO, Dillinger Four, and anything Travis Ramin is involved with rock our world. We can't wait to get out there and tour!
Sarah: Mike and I both sprung from the loins of the Midwest, so to speak, so we're both pretty stoked about it. Also, it helps to just get out of Seattle. Time to push our little baby bird out of the nest!

MRR: One of the few things we have to be proud of here in the Midwest (Indiana specifically) is the Zero Boys. Mike, you interviewed Paul-Z. Sarah made you a t-shirt of the band for Mike and there's a picture of the band (with former drummer Heather-Jane) in front of the Vicious Circle album. I hear Paul's vocal style in your own vocals, Mike. Is that a fair assumption that he's an influence?
Mike: Absolutely, he is an influence on me. That was one of the very best interviews I have ever done. It was so great to see someone who is still so enthusiastic and happy with what he has going on now, not just stuck in the past or too bitter to want to remember the past. A really cool guy and I can only hope the reunion shows continue and they come to the West Coast. We need the Zero Boys!

MRR: On your website and in the song "Long Legs," the work of John Hughes gets referenced. Is it an obsession/fixation/liking beyond the fact that all of his "brat pack films" are great?
Sarah: You could call it an obsession. I think it's just a pleasant side-effect from growing up "in the '80s." I'll take Molly Ringwald over Hillary Duff or whoever any day. Mike and I always talk about how all the teen-idols or whatever nowadays are just completely boring. What is it you always say, Mike? If Britney Spears walked into the Gap, you wouldn't be able to recognize her?
Mike: Yeah, Molly Ringwald was the coolest! I was and am definitely obsessed with John Hughes films and have easily seen *Weird Science* over a hundred times. Today's teen stars are so bland. They are like wallpaper people, which is what people seem to want. They don't want a character or personality; they want people who remind them of themselves, bland and boring and dressed just right. Boring, boring, boring, Sidney.
Sarah: What?! Ha ha!

MRR: Is the subject in "Long Legs" a real person? And which gender was she or he? Or do you still don't know or care?
Sarah: Yeah, she's kind of a blend of a couple different people in town. There's this great local Seattle drag queen named Ursula (of Ursula and the Androids) who is part of the inspiration. The other lady is definitely a girl, despite a heated conversation I had one night with Mike's old bandmates. They

insisted she was a guy. I was adamant she was a girl. But since I wrote that song, I've learned her name and spoken with her a few times and she seems really nice and cool, so I wouldn't want to "out" her as the lady in the song. I also just love in general that this scene accepts people who are living outside of traditional gender lines. I love Wayne/Jayne County, the New York Dolls, and the Toilet Boys. I think I wrote "Long Legs" soon after seeing the movie "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" too.

MRR: Continuing on with the songs, has anyone taken the band to task over "B-Side of My Heart?" It's a rejection song, and yet, you're record fanatics, right? Isn't the B-side the whole reason for buying some singles?
Mike: No one has taken us to task yet. There is definitely something to the B-side as better song aesthetic. I often find that to be the case. However, in the 45 days, there was definitely the idea that the A-side was the "hit" and the B-side was overlooked or not as important. This is probably the only tune I have ever written that was completely fiction. I came up with the idea and it seemed like a classic idea for a power pop/punk song so I wrote it up. It's still one of my favorite tunes. I figure all the hardcore record geeks can dig the idea behind it.

MRR: Did "Stare Hard" really happen?
Sarah: No. Sort of. I mean, creepy assholes do hit on you while you're just trying to ride the bus home from work. It's pretty annoying. You've just worked eight hours and you're exhausted, but since the bus route heads through the club district, drunk dudes think you're fair game. I don't own a gun. It's just a favorite fantasy. I think I was listening to a lot of Loli and the Chones when I penned that one.

MRR: Is "Spinning Labels" a reiteration of the idea expressed in Derek Jarman's Jubilee that if the music is loud enough, it's easy to ignore the world falling down around you?
Mike: I am not familiar with that particular reference, but there might be a little of that in there. The main idea behind it is enjoying yourself in your little cave after you have been dealing with the world. It is also a slight nod to Uncle Tupelo as well as a reference to a not so happy period of time in my life where my records were pretty much all I had. Listening to records has definitely gotten me through a lot of good and bad times through the years, and still does to this day.

MRR: The first girl I was ever nuts about rode a Sweet Thunder dirt bike so it has a special place in my heart. What led to titling a song that?
Sarah: I actually had that bike myself, so I must be the same age as your first crush. What a cool bike that was! The song actually is about Sweet Thunder the bike, and that feeling of freedom and fun that I got just from riding the bike down to the end of the street with headphones blasting in my ears, feeling like nothing and no one could fuck with me. That's a feeling you don't get much as a grown-up, not that I've found anyway. I also wrote the song right after I got my first car, so I was feeling that freedom once again, with the ability to split town whenever, just drive. Of course, now I curse my car on a daily basis. Also, you may have noticed that Mike and I are a couple of bad-attitude kids. Ha! I don't think we're too jaded. We're just pretty cynical. I wanted to write a song that was purely about having fun and feeling good.

MRR: Sarah, you'd said after the first demo that you felt that the band was ostracized in the local scene, a sentiment echoed by at least one reviewer on the band's site. Has this improved? Has it gotten worse or stayed the same?
Sarah: Well, hmmm.... I don't want to burn bridges. Okay, fuck it. Yeah, we got all sorts of flack when we first started playing out. "Your songs are too long. Your songs are too slow. You can't sing. You can't play. Blah blah blah. Your friends show up after your set and are like, "oh, we missed you? Oops." But in the words of Cliff, [Poncier, from the movie *Singles*], "This negative energy only makes me stronger." Ha ha! We just kept on doing what we were doing, and some people came around. We managed to be embraced by a circle of friends in the local garage scene and that helped. But really, for the most part, fuck Seattle. If you're not playing Death Cab For Cutie-type indie pop or that new disco-funk-punk bullshit, you're not going to pull any people. But those aren't the type of people I'd want to pull anyway, so fuck it.
Mike: The image thing seems to be really important to most people. They seem to base all their likes and dislikes on the right image or identity. Thankfully, most of those people leave us alone. People who dig this band are real music fans that are not caught on what you look like or what gender your members are.

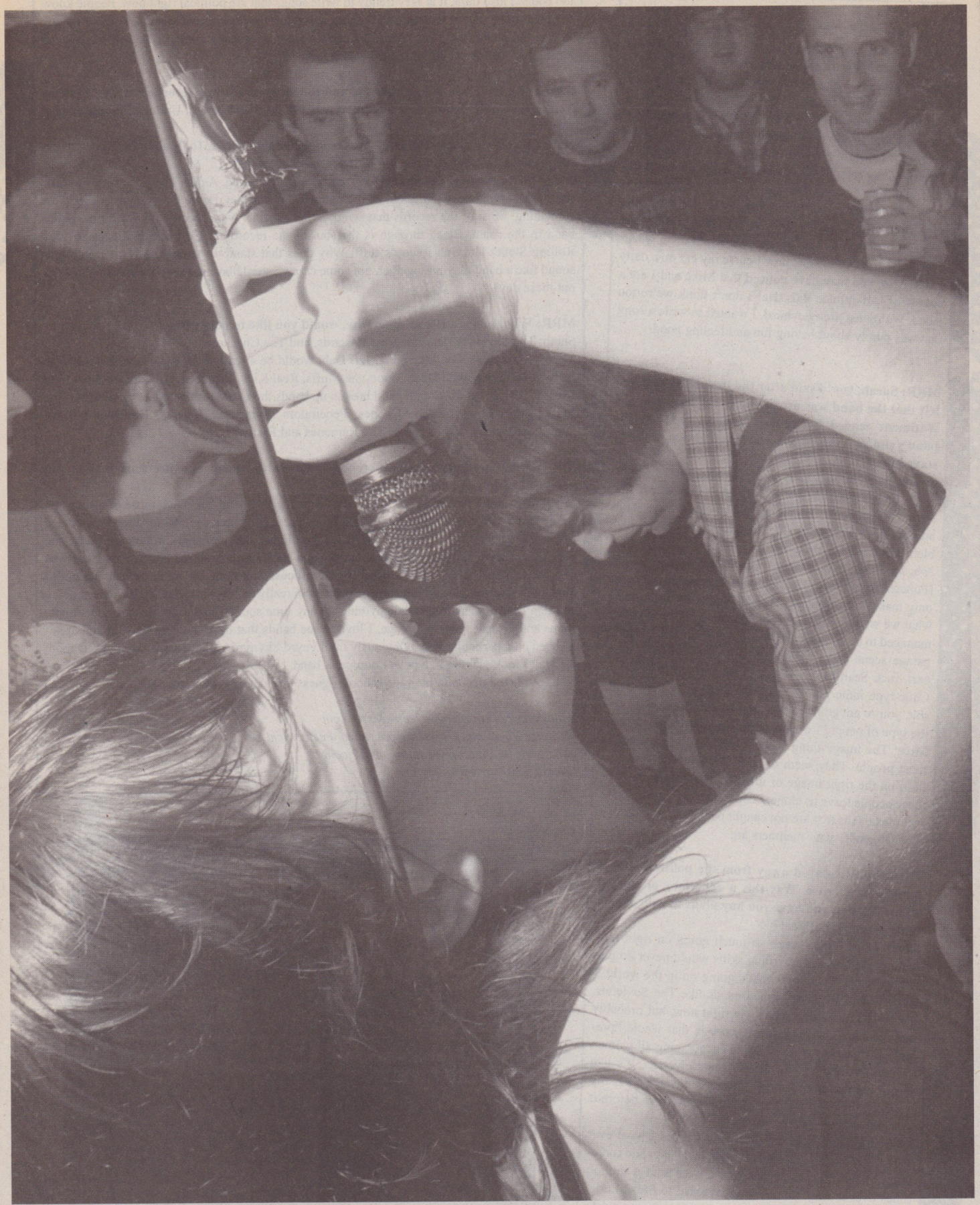
MRR: You've stayed away from the political side of punk content wise. Was this a conscious or unconscious decision and have you any plans to ruin a good thing by going political?
Sarah: I just think there's so much going on right now that my mediocre songwriting skills would never do justice to how I feel about what's going on in the world. I leave that to far more skilled bands like The Soviettes. There's so much that scares me right now, but probably what terrifies me most to my core is that whole "pre-pregnant" status that the FDA is encouraging all women of child-bearing age to classify themselves as. It's like something out of an Anthony Burgess novel. This really is a dark time and it's only going to get worse before it gets better.
Mike: I agree. These are the scariest times I have ever seen. However, the idea that I might be able to add something to the discussion that hasn't been said a million times over is very slim. I will leave that to Steve Earle, who is writing some great songs about it that won't date too badly. I also think it is very trendy to write songs that are political right now. People know they will get a pat on the back and others will think they are a good person, without having to take too much risk. How much of a chance are you honestly taking to be anti-Republican right now? You are about as radical as Jay Leno.

MRR: You have two demos thus far and the most recent was recorded at Egg Studios. You seemed quite happy that the sound was still loud and rough. Underlying reasons for this?
Sarah: That's where the song lives! We could record through ProTools and smooth out all the rough edges, but then that wouldn't even sound like us.
Mike: I have major issues with the current idea of recording. Again, everyone wants to take the character and personality out of their sound. I guess they figure they might "make it" or something. Most of the records that stand the test of time were recorded live with the entire band in the room. Bleed through is the soul of the recording. Go back and listen to your Rolling Stones and Sun Records stuff. Why does that stand up so well? I want a record to sound like a band playing together, not some crappy, sterile boring thing like most recordings out these days.

MRR: Who, realistically or otherwise, would you like to play with?
Sarah: The Soviettes, The Heartless Bastards, and The Checkers
Mike: All of those would be great. Jeff Dahl would be a really big one for me. I would also really love to play with Dead Moon, the Muffs, Real Kids, Visqueen, Groovie Ghoulies, and Diamond Dogs. As far as older and broken up bands the first ones that come to mind are The Modernettes, Loli And The Chones, Penetrators (Syracuse), Joneses, Hollywood Brats, Dimestore Haloes, and of course The Ramones and Fastbacks.

MRR: What similarities or differences between the band and previous groups you belonged to do you hear sound wise?
Mike: This is the first band for Sarah. As far as me this band has much more of a focus on songwriting and tempo than my previous band. The Zillionaires were all for short, snotty, and ripping. I loved that band and still do. Our LP still gets plenty of spins around our house and Sarah and I have definitely talked about doing a snotty Loli And The Chones style band on the side at some point. But this band is really focused on trade off vocals, clean and not as loud guitar and simple and fun songs. So far, I am really happy with what we have been doing and don't have plans to change anything up any time soon. The similarities are fun, simple songs and no real focus on image. I love to see bands that have their own sound and aren't focused on a particular look. Obviously my Lynyrd Skynyrd looking ass is not worried about the way I look playing in a power pop/punk band.
Sarah: I played the cello in grade school. I guess that doesn't count, though.

Band website: http://www.electrickisses.com
MySpace Page: http://www.myspace.com/theelectrickisses
Label website: http://www.fullbreach77.com
E-mail: getelectric@hotmail.com



THIS PAGE: BUSY SIGNALS. THAT PAGE: EPOXIES (TOP), EXCLAIM (BOTTOM). ALL PHOTOS BY ICKI.

HOLY SHIT!

Listening to Holy Shit! is like standing waist-deep in the ocean. The water feels good, but you're not in control—the current pushing and pulling you, waves crashing over your head and the undertow waiting to drag you to the bottom. All of this can be unsettling if you don't expect it, but once you're familiar with it, you can relax a bit and enjoy the sensation. Hooks pile upon hooks, gears jammed into high, low, and reverse in quick succession—not with mechanical metal precision but with ragged fury and calculated chaos, reveling in the noise and confusion, waiting for everyone to catch up to their last move when in fact they're already making the next one. Each 40-second burst is a slice of life, shaved razor-thin from the delicious Smoked Ham of Existence and cured to tasty perfection. Exultation, joy, confusion, anger, frustration, anguish...these are all present and accounted for within these short stories, tales woven with an eye towards the absurdity in everyday reality, spit out in rapid haste like a friend bursting into the living room to tell everyone a story while the details are still fresh. This as opposed to the monotonous screeching and growling of monotonous people making mostly monotonous hardcore punk music in this millennium. Holy Shit! is a group without an image, without politics or an agenda other than make it fast and unique and keep it on the verge of collapse at all times, musically, bodily and emotionally. Damn, does that sound emo? They're not emo. I didn't mean to make them sound like emo. Fuck. Do I have to rewrite this whole thing??? Shit. I'm going to bed. Fuck it. Bye.

NATO PAISANO questions:

MRR: You've done plenty of touring. As Napoleon (original member of La Fraction) once sang, "A band tours on its stomach." Where do you enjoy eating while on the road?

Eric: Czech Stop in Texas (thanks Marked Men) and truck stop garbage cans everywhere.

Andy: Tamale House in Austin and pretty much any Memphis barbecue—hold the slaw.

Tony: Anywhere Allison from Friday Knight in Chattanooga lives. She's the most amazing hostess!

Tabman: Grease trucks in New Jersey, New York pizza, and Sbarros.

MRR: Surely, Holy Shit! has been to some shitty places while on tour. Where do you hate? I, of course, mean, what places do you target your hatred at, rather than where do you geographically feel feelings of hatred?

Andy: No, but I shat in my hand and threw it at a car dealership in Green Bay six years ago and it's still there! It *felt* religious! I crusade back there every now and then.

Tabman: One time I shat on a beach in Florida and buried it with my hand. This question also inspired me to piss on a church near Madison, WI after our last show there.

MRR: Scenario: Holy Shit! is riding on a train traveling at a speed of approximately 65 mph, when six religious fundamentalists—let's say evangelical Christians—hijack the train. Two of them force their way into the engineer's quarters, while two guard the door. The last two walk up and down the aisles, brandishing pocket knives and other small cutting weapons. You learn through some means that the hijackers are going to detonate a "dirty bomb" (i.e. non-nuclear large explosive packed with radioactive material that would spread toxic

MRR: What are each of your favorite songs that pertain to the subject of trains?

Tabman: "Night Train" by G 'N' R.

Tony: "Hopping Someone Else's Train" by The Cure.

Andy: "Freight Train Blues" by Hank Williams.

Eric: "Trains" by The Vapors.

MRR: You've released several records and even a tape or two. What's the stupidest and/or most absurd thing you've ever read in a review of your music?

Andy: When we played live for this American Popular Music class at UW-Milwaukee, there was this really awkward sit-down Q&A session with like 100 kids who think punk is a joke. This nü metal dude asked me, "Have you ever listened to Pantera? You should really, like, palm-mute more like those guys."

Tony: The fact that we've never really had a bad review. *Bull*shit!

Tony: Gary, Indiana. We've never played there but just driving in it is so depressing! We make sure to roll up the windows the whole way through.

Andy: Arkansas, but only because the highway pigs are vicious!

Tabman: Buffalo, New York.

Eric: New York City and Houston.

Tabman: You don't hate New York City—you love it. Buffalo is the New York bane.

MRR: Holy Shit! is a name that means many things to many people. Do any of you have a favorite religion?

Eric: Scientology, cause it's fake and so ridiculously American.

Tony: Christianity, cause I wanna argue with Eric.

Tabman: Rob Schneider is God. I just saw him in *Click* and *Little Man*, both brilliant performances.

Andy: "Jedi," just because there are actually people out there who consider it a religion. I loathe *Star Wars*, though.

MRR: Has any member of Holy Shit! actually shat in, on, or near a church since the inception of the band? How about a synagogue? Mosque? Masonic temple?

radioactive waste several miles in diameter) that they've concealed on the train when the train reaches its destination: Grand Central Station in New York City. There is no way to stop the train without entering the engineer's quarters. Do you attempt to force your way into the engine room and stop the train before it reaches its target? At least one member of Holy Shit! would die if you attempted this, and you might not even succeed. Or, do you take on the two roving hijackers and try to jump off the speeding train, saving yourselves but dooming Manhattan? All four of you would most likely survive with injuries, but think of the shame. Or what?

All: Doom Manhattan!

Tabman: Save Grift Dogs! I'll sacrifice myself for a deep fried bacon-wrapped hot dog with a fried egg on it.

MRR: Speaking of trains, have any of you ever hopped a train? How do you feel about train hopping?

Tabman: Hey, Nate, we hopped a train together once, and then you made me hop off 'cause you were scared. Waaah!

Andy: Sure we have.

MRR: It is safe to say that Holy Shit! is a hardcore band. However, you've got that original sound that could perhaps be taken as a threat by the hardcore orthodoxy. Do you ever feel out of place at hardcore shows or festivals? If so, provide an example.

Eric: I don't think we really give a fuck about fitting in at a show. We'll play with any kind of band.

Andy: Were not trying to ape anybody so I guess we'd be out of place at some of those fests where every hardcore band sounds exactly like the one that played before them.

Tony: "They" fucking deserve us.

Tabman: I only feel out of place at Chinese Telephones shows. I don't know whether to stay 'cause they're my friends or to go upstairs 'cause they suck.

Eric: I can't believe you just said that.

MRR: What's the darkest-colored article of clothing that each of you owns?

Eric: What's blacker than black? Stupid question!

Andy: Were punk rockers! Half the closet's inherently black! Fewer laundry visits.

Tony: Unless you beat off wearing your shirt.

Andy: Only on tour.

MRR: You've all been in many bands besides Holy Shit!, and virtually all of these bands have one thing in common: they have broken up. Why hasn't Holy Shit! broken up yet?

Eric: Why haven't you broken up yet, Nate? Just give it time anyway.

Andy: Cause we've never hated each other? I don't know. There's never been a reason to break up. It's still fun! And considering we used to be split between two cities two hours apart, I feel we're always kind of making up for lost

time (like Peter Case).

Tony: Quite simply, the world needs us. To break up now would strip the entire earth of purpose.

MRR: Onstage, things can get pretty crazy at a Holy Shit! show. Have you ever felt in actual physical, psychological, or colonogical danger during a performance?

Eric: Never once. I have drums.

Tabman: Adam K elbow-dropped a monitor on my face in Manitowoc, WI. Try explaining that scar.

Andy: I just hurt myself. My fingers always get cut up on my guitar or I get that thing where guitar string grooves form permanently in my fingertips. I've hurt my ass, never my colon.

Tony: Orlando. Look up Holy Shit! on Youtube and you will find "Live at the Drug House" in two parts. That shit was crazy.

Andy: That was psychological danger.

MRR: And in general, do any of you ever feel depressed, or lonely, perhaps at night?

Andy: C'mon, those are just lyrics.

Eric: Nope, I always have Old Thompson (Rachel's Mom).

Tabman: I still sleep with a glow worm. So, no.

Tony: I'm so terribly lonely. And depressed. Big deal.

MRR: It is up to each and every member of the human race to decide whether or not they want to have children. The odds are very good that at least one member of Holy Shit! will father at least one child. If any of you have children, how much will you expose them to the dangers of your music? Will you tell them your band's real name? I hope so.

Eric: Only if they have a chance to hear it before they're aborted.

Andy: Don't bring those odds to Vegas, Nate.

Tabman: I'm going to name my first born after the band. Holy Shitman.

Tony: I'm going to have three kids with an ugly girl.

MRR: Do you have any messages or advice for the parents of the children of the world?

Tabman: Just rub it off.

Eric: Yeah, just 'cause you have a bunch of kids on the way. At least my Dojo will be robbing your house.

Tony: Congratulations on your decision to become a parent.

MRR: If you could travel back in time and say one thing to Jesus while he was on the cross—assuming for the purposes of this question that he was, indeed, crucified—what would it be?

Eric: Admit you're a liar!

Tabman: Wanna burn one? Stordeur!

Andy: You're dying for Pat Robertson's sins.

MRR: And if you could add one more commandment to the Ten Commandments, what would it be?

Andy: Fill in the _____.

Eric: Stupid question. Fuck this, I'm walking across the street to get a Sparks.

Tony: Thou shalt not front!

MRR: Finally: you are handed a glass that is 50% filled with shit. Is the glass half full of shit, or half empty?

All: It's always completely full of shit!

CLINT PARSON questions:

MRR: Now some would tend to lump you guys in with this whole "new wave of old school hardcore" thing that's been going around lately. In fact, though, you guys have been around for a while, correct? When and why exactly did you guys start out?

Eric: Mid-September 2001, when Tony and Tabman were still virgins. Do the math.

Tony: I turned down four girls before I gave it up. And even when I finally did fuck I waited a year and two months to do so with her. I'm anything but easy.

Andy: Hardcore kind of had a bad rep in our region. Green Bay had a great hardcore scene when we were in diapers but no one seemed to care about that stuff anymore. Don't get me wrong, there were a lot of good punk and garage bands around then but we went apeshit over a lot of old hardcore shit too. We felt this *need* to start a short, fast thrash band. It was inevitable.

MRR: Speaking of all these new, awesome hardcore bands, what do you guys think of all that? Is there a common bond between bands such as yourselves, Career Suicide, Gorilla Angreb, Formaldehyde Junkies, Chronic Seizure, etc.? Is this a legitimate new mini-trend or is it just attempted hype and/or image-making?

Eric: We're not one of those bands you speak of. And now that I think about it, we're older than all those bands, too! I remember the first time Catholic Boys went to Toronto. Career Suicide was just starting, and Holy Shit! was already a band. That makes me feel weird.

Andy: Those are all great bands but we don't consider ourselves to be part of any midget trend if there really is one.

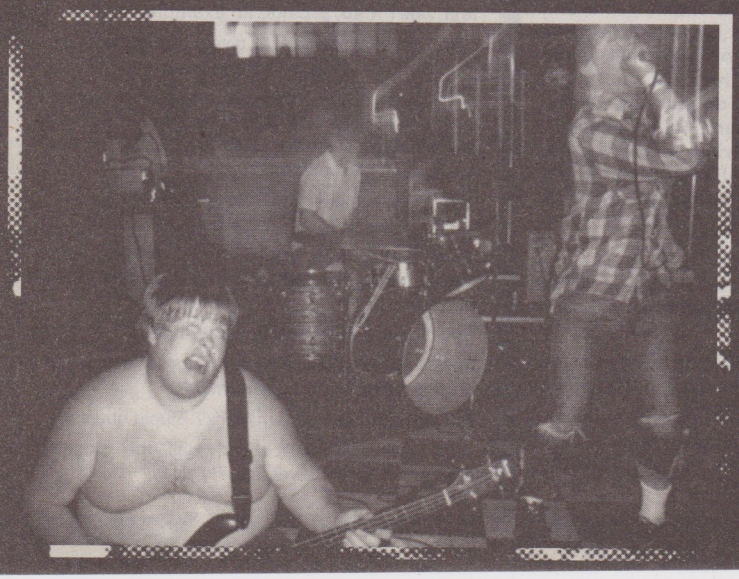
Tony: Whatever's hot on the message boards, dude. The cool guys with opinions make the scene.

MRR: Are you guys rebelling against the "tough guy hardcore" mold of past days?

Tony: No.

Eric: How could a bunch of pussies be a tough guy band, that's what I wanna know.

Andy: Actually we're just into the whole punk thing



for the kickboxing!

MRR: Do you think that the easy access to old hardcore records provided by Soulseek and other P2P's has played any part in this recent resurgence in awesome hardcore?

Eric: I would hope so.

Tabman: I don't wanna do this.

Andy: None of that shit ever had any influence on our existence. It's always been about records. However, since I've been able to afford (read: steal) the internet I'm constantly on Soulseek. There's just too much great shit out there that you can't find (or afford) on vinyl.

Tony: (way too busy playing Tetris)

MRR: Do you even agree that hardcore went through some lean years there, especially in terms of fun, light-hearted non-metal leaning stuff?

Eric: There's always a shortage of fun hardcore bands!

Andy: I don't know. I think that there are and always have been great hardcore bands out there somewhere. You just have to seek them out. It all depends on how much you care to care. If there's a shortage of great music, start blaming yourself.

MRR: As a band, who is your enemy? In other words, what band/type of music is Holy Shit! doing its damnedest to try and destroy?

Andy: That new John Cougar Mellencamp song on the Chevy commercials they play like ten different versions of during Packer games! Just when you get used to blocking Bob Seger's "Like a Rock" from your subconscious, they have to start up with this shit! Every time I hear that "This Is Our Country" song I wonder if Paul from the Zero Boys recorded it 'cause that would be real fucked up! Civilization's dying!

Tabman: I'll see you in hell, Henley.

MRR: Why do you guys hate banks so much?

Tony: Cause I'm a fucking idiot.

Andy: They profit off of human ineptitude. And even if you're on top of your shit they'll find some other way of dicking you out of your hard-earned bucks! It's nearly impossible to exist nowadays without a check card. Thanks for the convenience, jerks!

MRR: Pretty much all of you guys are in multiple bands right now. Do think that type of thing can serve to hurt a band? Does it pull people's attention in too many directions, leaving them not really focused on any band?

Eric: Of course it *can* hurt a band more but it doesn't have to.

Tabman: Other bands come and go.

Andy: I'm only in one band right now so quit rubbing it in. When I was in multiple bands none of them suffered as a result. I always try to give my all in every band. If anything, it helps to be in a variety of bands 'cause then there's an outlet for different styles.

Tony: No, but Super Mario Kart can certainly pull a person's attention in different directions.

MRR: So most of your shows are in houses right now. What with the non-ending cycle of co-option, do you think that house shows might ever go mainstream? Currently there's that photo book in production about punk houses. How far away can we be from a punk house reality show, replete with a bad Screeching Weasel cover over the opening credits?

Eric: We already made that reality show. See "_____ House Blood & Cum 2001."

Andy: Hey, I'm in that book! It better not "go mainstream" 'cause I already signed my rights away!

Tony: Basement shows will never be mainstream. It's impossible, physically and conceptually. Basement shows are inherently underground, dude.

Tabman: Didn't you see the *Holy Shit!: Live at the Drughouse* video? That'd be one polluted mainstream.

MRR: Speaking of house shows, for well over a decade now the standard door price thereof seems to be stuck at three to five dollars. Clearly, the world has become a much more expensive place to live nowadays, especially with bands on tour and higher gas prices. When will we be allowed to raise door prices? Would people ever pay seven or eight bucks for a house show?

Eric: This has already happened. $5 is the base price for a house show nowadays and if people have more, they'll pay it.

Andy: $(Number of touring bands) x 1 + ($1 or $2) seems reasonable to me in the current American house show climate.

MRR: So even though our liquor stores close at 9:00 p.m., Milwaukee is currently ranked the number one city for binge drinking. Here alcoholism is institutionalized, if not mandatory. My question is: when, if ever, do you think you might start cutting back or even cutting out this type of behavior? How long can one maintain this wild hedonistic lifestyle before it starts catching up with you?

All: Until death do us part(y)!

Andy: Who are *you* calling an alcoholic? You treat pitchers like pints! We got ranked the #1 alcoholic city by *Forbes* and then the #2 party city by *Maxim*, but the criteria for all of those lists is always so random and fucked up. They take a bunch of semi-relevant stats—for example, the amount of alcohol sold per capita, number of underage and DUI offenses per capita, gender ratio[!], etc.—throw them into their messy equation, and read the printout. It always ends up saying more about the survey writers than the survey results, you know? And I just know that these stats will somehow end up hurting us. Increased levels of pigs will care more about college terrorists and their "illegal taverns" (that's a $10,000 fine and nine months in jail in these parts) than people getting shot up for their wallets and Nintendo Wiis.

Tabman: Celebration!

Tony: I am a professional alcoholic.

MRR: All of you guys are well into your mid-20s, with Tony being even older. Do you ever feel silly playing hardcore at your ages? When Minor Threat started, Ian was the senior member at a ripe 18 years old. Classically, bands would start out as hardcore in their teenage years and then progress into what-the-fuck-ever as they aged and became better musicians. You guys would seem to eschew this tendency. Do you think you'll still be playing hardcore a decade from now?

Andy: I'll still love hardcore a decade from now so it's probably safe to say I'll be playing it. Same goes for other punk rock, too. Shit ain't just some flavor-of-the-day thing for me. I enjoy lots of varieties of frozen custard.

Tony: Personally, everything I've produced is sharply relevant. I have evolved past the old music, but still appreciate everything that it is.

Eric: We've already played everything else. That's why we started a hardcore band.

MRR: Nowadays people in general seem to be staying a primal part of the scene longer and longer. Before, they might drop out by age 23-24 or so. Currently, it's not unusual for someone past the big three-oh to still live in a house with a name. Why do you think this is? Is it just a symptom of the longer life spans people now enjoy?

Tony: Dropping out is for people in school.

Andy: I just think it's cause those people saw punk as a passing phase when they were in school. It always was more of a fashion thing for them. They knew they were gonna grow out of it.

Eric: Yeah, or they got knocked up.

Andy: I'm going to settle down on my own terms and will always adjust my life to continue to fucking rock 'n' roll. I envision myself being that old guy that you see at shows.

Tony: There are a lot more older people around cause we're the old ones.

MRR: And just because this is a nationally published interview, tell me how much you guys pay in rent. I want to rub it in for the rest of the country. Would you agree that, unfortunately, Milwaukee is the coolest, cheapest city left to live in the US?

Andy: It sure is fucking "cool" when you don't turn the thermostat on all winter! I pay $162.50 a month.

Tony: $162.50 a month, too. 12 Steps House, bitch!

Eric: $156 a month! And the heat is still off.

Tabman: $233 a month. House WK.

you're you, i'm me

THE STORY OF LOST CHERREES:

PART ONE by lance hahn

"It is due to this ignorance that the entire life and nature of the girl is thwarted and crippled. We have long ago taken it as a self-evident fact that the boy may follow the call of the wild; that is to say, that the boy may, as soon as his sex nature asserts itself, satisfy that nature; but our moralists are scandalized at the very thought that the nature of a girl should assert itself."

Emma Goldman wrote this in "The Traffic in Women," referring to sexual Puritanism as responsible for the repression and oppression of women as male power. With that same formula applied to pop music, it's easy to see how an archetype reinforced by repetition and a fear of female power has defined the role of women in music. While access to the means of production may have made the appearance of more women drummers and lead guitarists slower coming, the traditional role of female vocalist was ripe for detouring.

From the beginning of punk, there was what hacks love to refer to as the sacred and the profane, or the virgin and whore. Patti Smith versus Debbie Harry? While it turned out that both were intelligent and creative forces, Patti Smith represented some sort of dark devil woman whereas Debbie Harry was the girl next door. Patti Smith was a force that, with her background in journalism, was impossible for rock writers to ignore or displace. However, especially in England, Debbie Harry was easier to write about as she was more of what was considered the traditional female vocalist with her platinum hair and mainstream good looks.

The media would consider writing this same story about women in punk whenever they could. Even the record labels were as eager to exploit women's involvement for the sex rather than their ideas or commitment, standards even the most untalented male punk musicians were measured by.

The Adverts were a great young band who should have mostly been known for their aggressive but melodic music with near poetic lyrics. But capitalizing on bass player, Gaye, Stiff Records opted for old school cynicism in marketing the group.

TV Smith in Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming*: "...although they were doing it in a mocking way, it was still a big shock to see the cover of our first record, and there was a big picture of Gaye's face. It suddenly hit home—we've got a good-looking girl in the group and that's what's going to happen. We didn't think it was an issue. It cheapened it for all of us, that people would find a gimmick in what we'd hoped would avoid all gimmicks."

With anarcho punk challenging so many of the other commercial and exploitative aspects of the record industry, the role of women changed not only as a force for feminist revolution, but also in terms of the way cheap gimmicks replaced creativity and imagination in defining musicians as entertainers rather than artists.

The Lost Cherrees began life as Zyclon C, a punk band mostly started for fun.

Drummer Nuts: "The original lineup consisted of Sian on vocals, Steve on drums and Dave on guitar. This was 1981 or '82. I first met Steve after he contacted the fanzine I'd started doing. I went along to his parents' garage to watch them rehearse along with another infamous local punk band, Warning. Also there that night was Bev who later became the singer with The Cherrees. The punk scene in the area wasn't too bad with a lot of bands. Sadly, most of the bands consisted of the same members chopping and changing names and instruments."

Bassist Steve: "The original band at school was called Zyclon C and featured myself on drums, a bloke called Dave Greaves on guitar, and Sian Jeffries on vocals. It was 1980. The local punk scene was much like it was anywhere, just lots of kids getting together and having a laugh. In and out of bands."

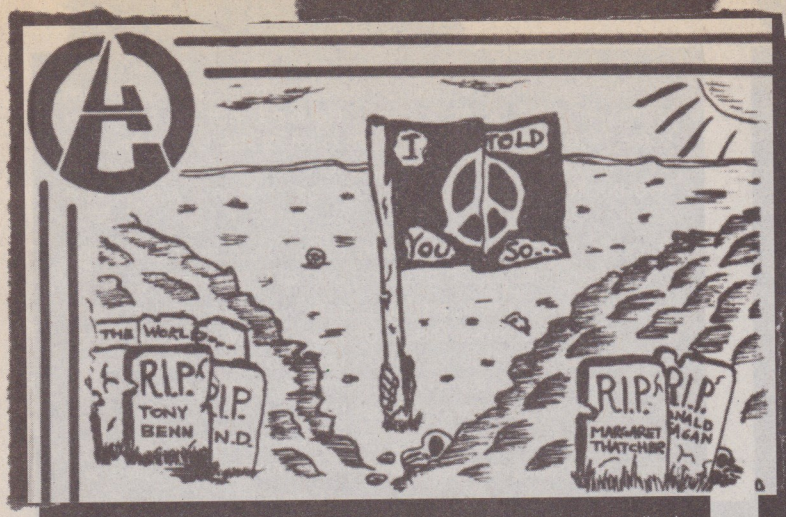
Despite the serious name, the group was more for fun as was the spirit of their local punk scene.

Vocalist Bev: "The punk scene in Surrey was probably fairly typical, lots of bands who made up for what they lacked in ability to play with the ability to drink a lot. There were places to hang out, like a little record shop in Sutton, where you could guarantee to meet up with your mates, make new ones and go off to a gig together."

Founding member Stephen Battershill was inspired to start a band by getting into punk at its golden era.

Steve: "I first heard punk music in 1977, it was the thing that my mates and I listened to at school. It was when we found we could make a similar noise that it made us want to get guitars and start bands."

Getting that first taste of playing music in a band, they decided to get a bit more organized, despite a less serious



band name, Lost Cherrees. The change in name also called for a shift in lineup.

Nuts: "The original lineup, as I've said, was a trio. It was only after Dave on guitar left that Andy was asked to join. At this point Steve decided to switch from drums to bass guitar and asked me to take over the vacant drum slot. I think if you listen to the first EP, *No Fighting No War*, then that fairly accurately conveys the sound of the band at the time. Rough 'n' ready but with lots of energy."

Nuts had also found punk rock like most kids in England.

Nuts: "My first interest in punk rock was seeing the energy of bands like the Pistols and The Stranglers on the TV and also the effect they had on people. My dad seemed especially annoyed whenever a punk band came on and made "a row." Being the age I was, anything that upset my dad was alright by me. Once I became friends with Andy, he introduced me to lots of other bands such as Stiff Little Fingers, Eater, Joy Division, etc. From here we both got more and more into punk. We used to have a weekly pilgrimage to Kingston to spend our hard earned pocket money on whatever new punk records were out. At the same time we started our own band, which consisted of me and Andy in his bedroom, Andy on an acoustic guitar that he found on a skip and me bashing the hell out of a record cover (The Tubes live) with a pair of drumsticks."

Shortly after regrouping as Lost Cherrees, they recorded their first demo recording.

Steve: "Sian and I were featured on the first recordings, joined by Andy and Nuts."

Nuts: "The early demo tapes were made for very little money in as quick a space of time as possible. I think this reflects when listened to."

Steve: "Really rough and ready, proper 1-2-3-4 heads-down punk. All noise and attitude, no actual talent, same as most bands starting out at that time."

That first demo tape was sent to the band Riot/Clone and with their help, the Lost Cherrees soon were performing live.

Nuts: "The early gigs were quite scary as we were still learning to play our instruments to be honest. From the outset we were all quite surprised that we managed to get away with it, even more so that people seemed to enjoy them! Many of the early gigs were played alongside Riot/Clone.

Steve: "Early gigs were exciting times. With bands like Riot/Clone, Flux of Pink Indians, Subhumans, Rubella Ballet, Rudimentary Peni, New Model Army, Conflict, Omega Tribe, Icons of Filth, and lots of others...I just felt part of something."

With the punk scene allying itself with any of a number of different tribes at that point, Lost Cherrees were already closest with the anarcho scene similar to Riot/Clone's relationship by default.

Nuts: "We were all very aware of the anarcho punk scene before we started the band and it was probably this that prompted all of us to start bands."

Steve: "Yes, I was very aware of Crass before we became Lost Cherrees."

Bev: "I lost touch with them all for a year or so but I used to go to the Anarchy Centre, firstly in Wapping and then Westbourne Park, most weeks and used to see the bands we ended up playing with. When I knew the Cherrees originally they were really just drinking buddies but I gradually started seeing them popping up in the scene and was proud to be asked to join."

The first anarcho bands set examples for groups like the Lost Cherrees similar to how the first wave of punk bands inspired countless punk bands around the world.

Nuts: "Seeing the DIY ethic of bands like Crass and The Epileptics made us realize that we could do the same thing ourselves. It also helped us form a lot of the views that were reflected in the lyrics of many of the songs that the band went on to write."

Steve: "Crass had a terrific influence on us lyrically, making me look closer at the importance of using the platform we'd created to get a message across."

It was through their new friendship with Riot/Clone that the group got their first chance to record for vinyl.

Nuts: "It was Andy who first contacted Riot/Clone with a view to setting up a gig with them. Once we'd played a few gigs with them it was Dave from Riot/Clone who suggested releasing a record. We'd not even thought about it at that point."

Steve: "Andy had written to Riot/Clone and sent them a demo. They offered us our first gig(s), and we became good mates from there. Dave Floyd offered to put out a single by us, and we accepted."

The seven-song EP was titled *No Fighting, No War, No Trouble, No More* and was released on Riot/Clone Records, the third release for that label. Super raw, the recording is minimal with a guitar wash of white noise. Fast paced, the band was catchy, with Sian's vocals closely following the bass melody.

Nuts: "The recording of the single and two previous demos was done at a studio in Kingston called Hark studios. It was a tiny basement studio and we recorded on a real shoestring budget. We worked through the night getting as many tracks recorded as humanly possible and emerging the next day completely knackered."

Steve: "The recording had horrible sound quality and

featured seven tracks recorded through the night in eight hours. To be honest, it's pretty bad, but we look back on it fondly and are very glad we did it. Amazingly, copies are changing hands for over £20 on eBay. Don't pay it, ask us and we'll send you a copy on CD!"

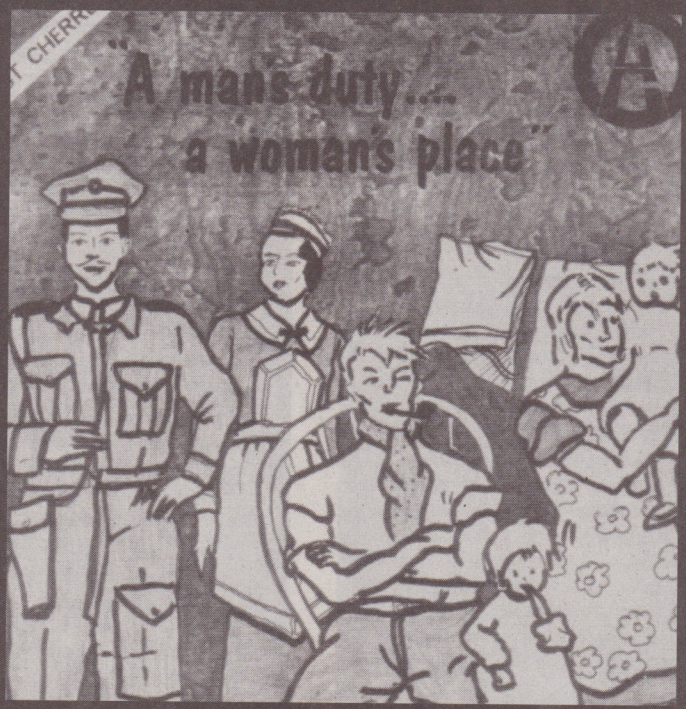
Starting with the great "Pain Relief," the band tears through "Race of the Test Tubes" before slowing down for their most melodic moment with "You Didn't Care." Next is "No Flag," a song somewhat based around "O Tennenbaum."

Nuts: "I think we felt at the time that it was the best we could do, given the limited facilities and abilities of the band. Even if we'd been put in a super duper state of the art 24-track recording studio it probably wouldn't have sounded much better—in fact, probably worse as it would have shown up our inadequacies. We were all pleasantly surprised when a lot of people started buying it and then saying how much they enjoyed it on top of that."

Steve: "It was quite cool to be the local band with a record out, and it sold out quite quickly. It didn't seem to matter how bad it was. People heard it for what it was, raw but honest. Then John Peel played it a few times and everything went fucking mad. It ended up in the top ten of the independent charts."

The 7" record was quickly followed up by a 20-song cassette on Bluurg. Filling out the sound a bit, they added Rob on guitar and keyboards. Mixing live and studio tracks, *Nothing New* was more raw punk including different versions of most of the tracks from *No Fighting*...

Nuts: "I think there're about four demos of unreleased stuff, although some of the songs did appear on record re-recorded or cannibalized for other songs."



Steve: "There were several early demos, some of which got used by the Subhumans' Bluurg label. There are still quite a few tracks that are unreleased. You can download plenty of unreleased stuff from the website (www.lostcherrees.com). We are planning on putting out a compilation of early demos and live recordings through our website's merchandise page."

Some of the stronger moments of the tape come from the 50s-style rock 'n' roll of "Civilised War" and oddly melodic D-Beat of "Do What You Wanna Do." Especially on the latter the group mixes elements of UK hardcore with their melodic sensibility, in some ways reminiscent of allied though non-anarcho bands like Action Pact. The record includes a funny, thrashed out version of the Monkees' "Pleasant Valley Sunday."

The group was also growing close with the band Conflict who wound up helping them out with several gigs.

Nuts: "I think we met Colin and Conflict just from setting up gigs and asking them to play. It was always quite strange to meet a lot of these bands that you'd only previously heard on record and read about in fanzines. You always expected to come face to face with very serious and angry people but found the majority to be very amiable, fun people (much like ourselves)."

Steve: "I got hold of Colin's phone number and gave him a ring, and he gave us a gig. He liked that we provided something a little different from a lot of the bands around at the time and ended up giving us quite a few gigs and eventually offered us a release on the new Mortarhate label."

Through their many gigs with other anarcho bands, the group was rightly seen as being part of that scene.

Nuts: "I think our whole short career we were involved with the anarchy scene. Many of the gigs we played were benefits. Despite this we often used to get called money grabbers. I could never understand this, seeing as we never made any money (and still don't)."

Steve: "We were involved with many of the groups. We attended marches and demos that mattered to us. Sian was a member of Animal Aid and the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, and we campaigned for an end to fox hunting. Played at literally dozens and dozens of benefit gigs for numerous worthy causes. At the current time I am actively involved in the campaigning of the protest group Fathers 4 Justice. I am currently on bail, facing conspiracy and public order charges."

Often it was just by luck that the group avoided the same police scrutiny that other anarcho bands faced.

Nuts: "We managed to avoid any direct hassle from the police (apart from one unfortunate incident at the Hammersmith Clarendon). One such incident was a gig I set up in Surbiton for Conflict, us and a few other bands. We left not long after our set and left Conflict to finish the gig off. It wasn't until the next day that we found out that there'd been a full scale riot after the gig and about 100 arrests!"

While decisions and direction for the band was made out of conviction, the decisions were all democratically not merely running with the politics of the day.

Nuts: "I'm loathe to use the word 'politics' as I wouldn't like to be described as a 'political' band but from the content of our lyrics and the causes we supported then our personal politics very much affected the way the band operated."

Steve: "The band was made of individuals, each with individual politics and opinions—wouldn't have it any other way. If any member of the band disagrees with a certain cause or has a problem of any kind with anything band related, we discuss the issues and come to a joint decision."

A second EP was planned at that point. Meant for release on Bluurg, the group recorded the *A Man's Duty... A Woman's Place* EP.

Nuts: "The second EP was a different kettle of fish altogether. A friend of Sian's parents', Jon Hiseman, had just built a super duper state of the art 24-track recording studio on the back of his house and allowed us to record it there. It was

about ten times the size of Hark studios. This time we had the time and ability to really do our best with the songs. This really showed us what could be done when you had access to decent equipment and the time to use it properly. My one abiding memory of that session, though, is trawling the streets with Dick of The Subhumans late at night to find some booze to fuel us through the remainder of the night, then finding Dick fast asleep on the grand piano later."

Suddenly faced with much higher production standards, the four-song EP is a huge leap in sophistication for the band. Excellent drum sounds made a huge difference. But also more time spent on vocals, often doubled, gave the band a more professional and more powerful sound.

Steve: "I was quite pleased with the songs, especially 'Blasphemy,' which I had written only recently before and the bit with the Bible readings and the thunder was all part of a dream I had had about the song. It came out exactly how I had imagined it and remains a personal favorite to this day. The guitar and drums in "Sexism's Sick Part Two" were also brilliant and completely set us apart from other bands of the genre at that time. Once again Peel liked it and played it and this time people were liking the music *and* the sentiment. It got to No. 4 in the independent charts and was in the top forty for 14 weeks."

Starting with the melodic, almost gothic mid-tempo "Blasphemy," the group was playing much more complex music. The keyboards are most prominent for the first time on the eerie, Siouxsie-like "No Trouble." On the second side, the band let loose a bit more with the up-tempo "Living in a Coffin" and one of the group's most memorable tracks, "Sexism's Sick Part 1 and 2."

Nuts: "The *Man's Duty* EP really captured the band perfectly. The songs were right, the sound was right and the production was right. On top of that, it sold really well! (Dodgy cover though)."

At the last minute, however, the record was pulled from Bluurg.

Steve: "The second EP was odd. We recorded it in a really nice studio that was situated in Sian's next door neighbor's house in Sutton, Surrey. It was originally intended to be released on Bluurg and Dick from Subhumans was there when we recorded it. I was round at Colin's house one afternoon and he played me their new studio recording 'Serenade is Dead,' so I played him a couple of tracks from the *Man's Duty* session. Straight away he insisted that he got to release it on Mortarhate."

By that point, Rob had left the group, replaced by Gail on keyboards and vocals. With Sian thinking of leaving the group to pursue other interests, they decided to look into other vocalists.

Nuts: "The reason we ended up with two vocalists is that Sian had said she was going to be leaving in the future so we needed to replace her. That's when Bev joined. It was only after she joined that Sian decided she wouldn't be leaving as soon as she'd thought and so we had two vocalists. We liked the sound so much that when Sian eventually did leave we had to replace her with Debbie. The keyboards were added to give the sound a new dimension and to move away from the trademark anarchy sound that so many other groups seemed to be replicating."

Steve: "Sian had started talking about moving on so she asked Bev, who had long since been a close friend of the band, to join. Gail had joined on keyboards because we wanted to try and add different sounds to the music. When we found that two vocals worked well but Sian still planned to leave, we asked Debbie to join. Then we were seven!"

Bev, who had been friends with the band for some time, had come to punk via older siblings.

Bev: "My brothers are a few years older than me and got into punk in 1976, so after a few years of trying to convince them that disco was better than punk I came around to their way of thinking. That was after flirting briefly with the two-tone thing in 1980. The bands that grabbed me first off were Tenpole Tudor and the Ramones, still faves today. I'd never seriously considered being in a band, didn't think I could sing and Steve had leant me a bass guitar to try and learn when the Cherrees were him on drums, Dave on guitar and Sian singing. I never mastered it so I gave it back; Steve learnt it and Nuts came in to take over the drums. (Steve played with his thumb over the top, just on the top string for a few years—I could have done that!)"

Nuts: "Bev had been around since the early days as a friend and Gail had been in a band called Adventures In Colour that had supported The Cherrees."

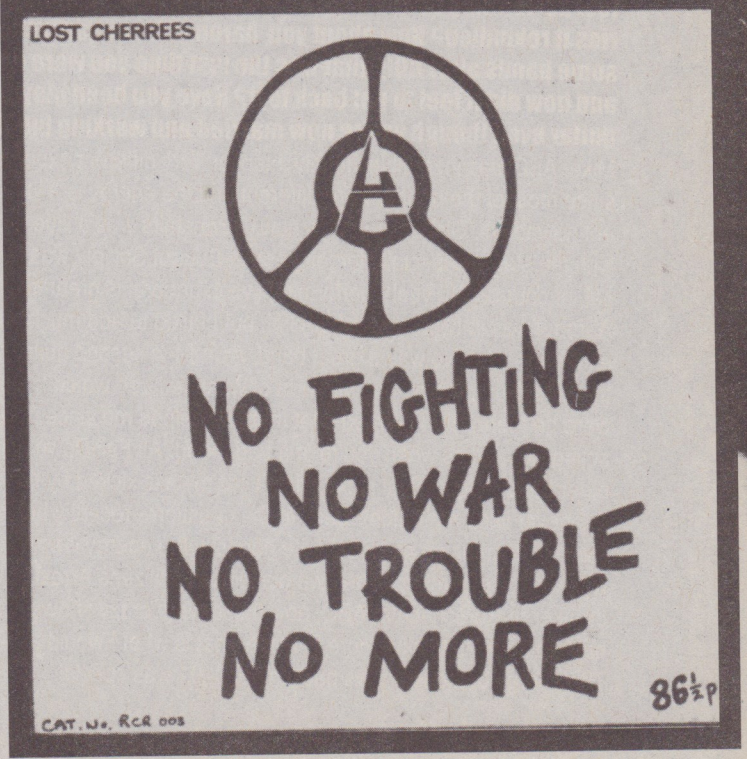
With two successful EPs out and a popular cassette, the group never did take advantage of this situation on the road.

Steve: "We never really toured. We went off in a van and played gigs all over the country, but never days in a row, always one here, one there. And it was fun; if it wasn't fun there wouldn't be any point."

The lack of touring was mostly for practical reasons, though the group did play as often as possible.

Nuts: "We always played as many gigs as we could and we became much tighter as a live band as a consequence of this. The advantage of having six people on stage was that if one person made a mistake it was less likely to be spotted. When we did play gigs we had to hire a box van, as there was so many of us. We also had to pay someone to drive it as none of us could drive at this point."

Partly to introduce the new six-piece lineup and partly to show some face to Dick, who they had taken their 7" away from, the group released *Live At Brannigan's, Leeds*, a 15-track cassette tape on Bluurg. A raw document, the group runs through furious versions of songs from both 7"s as well as a few new tracks, including a great encore of "Teenage Kicks." Along with the live tracks are two new studio recordings; a mid-tempo goth number titled "Lavender" and "Ooh-La-La," featuring male vocals for the first time.



GO!

Interview with Mike & Aaron by Jim Testa.

MRR: What events inspired the GO! reunion and how did it grow from the idea of playing to a show to actually recording a new CD? And what can we expect from GO! in the future?

Mike: Y'know, it just kind of happened. I contacted Aaron after 10-12 years of no communication and my partner Ken and I went up to see him and his wife Joanne, and maybe a month later we decided to get back together. Jim and Steve were really into it, so here we are.

Aaron: When Mike came to Seattle and I saw him for the first in 12 years, I realized that he hadn't aged too poorly and he could still probably fake it up on stage in front of a bunch of rabid fans. So I figured we could trot out the old songs..

Mike: Having GO! was the excuse I needed to really look around at the world again. In my view, anything is a lyric. They're all little pieces I need to draw in and pull together. I think when we got back together, it was definitely with the expectation of writing more. I think we were both unsure of what we wanted to put across. I hadn't written lyrics or music at all since 1993. Aaron was also not writing music. I just didn't want to suck. I didn't want it to be the second DYS record. If our best stuff was in 1990, well fine, let's not record anything else. But I'm really happy with the Reactive CD/EP.

Aaron: It was interesting writing this record. We got all esoteric with this one, in that we actually thought about the macro and micro factors of the record—worried about if it would be too all-new, or too retro, or too happy, or too critical/pessimistic. I think it's the most balanced record we've done yet, taking all the things that we do well. Probably my favorite song, "With This Ring," which really affirms what life is all about whether you are young or old, stupid or smart, black or white. The chorus is "life is about respect and love." Sure, it may sound a little hokey, but what human being would disagree? My favorite part of the song is when it's just drums and vocals during the chorus and everyone claps their hands above their heads. Really hearkens back to Ed Sullivan and the Beatles.

MRR: You haven't been on stage in a long time, Mike. How did it feel performing at ABC No Rio? Were there any specific memories it rekindled? How about you, Aaron? I know you were in some bands after GO!; what was the last time you were on stage and how did it feel to get back to it? Have you been playing the guitar even though you're now married and working full time?

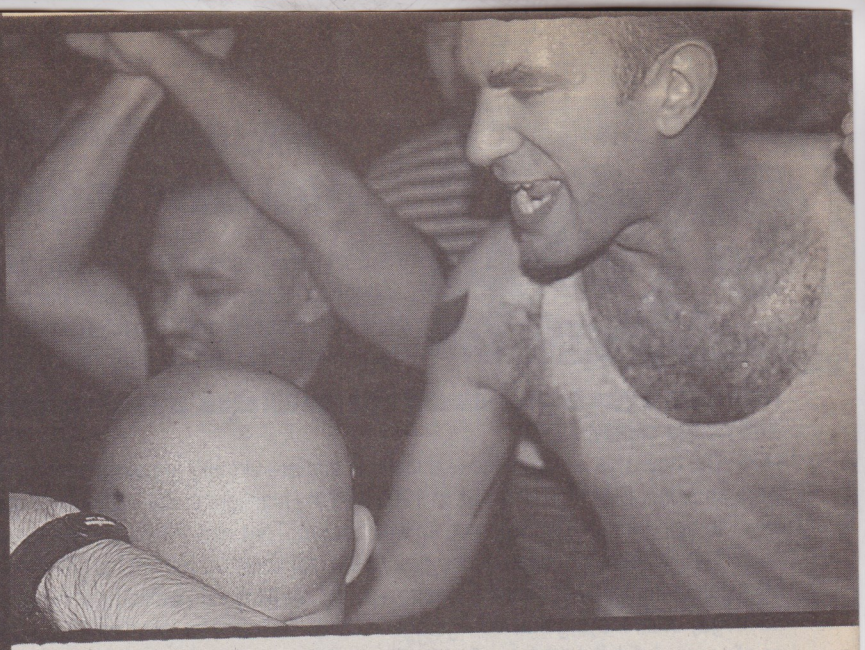
Mike: ABC was incredible. Totally intense. Very different experience, since most of the people were different and the energy is a little different nowadays. Glad it's upstairs now. Downstairs was a little too much with the stage, especially for tall people. Bugout Society was hysterical, of course. But yeah, performing live in general is great to do again.

Aaron: I was in two bands after GO!, but I failed to add much value to either one. Hell No was a great band. As a fill-in second guitarist for their first Europe trip, I fell far short of what Ted Leo would have done were he there. But I learned a lot that has helped me since, like not acting like an ass when you're in a bad mood. All Fall Down was the other band, and I'm just lucky I didn't get my ass kicked by the bassist (he never liked me much). Back to the question—recently being on stage was amazing at ABC. Quite honestly the energy was not as high was what I remember. When we played with Citizens Arrest or Jawbreaker or Rorschach at ABC, now those were crazy shows. If we got back to doing this thing more full-time, that is what I would aspire to. The energy of those shows back in 1990-'91 was special.

MRR: Many of us have old friends who we don't see for a long time. Then we get back together and it seems like the conversation picks up exactly where it left off. Would you say that describes the relationship between you two? Did you learn anything about yourselves and your friendship from this reunion that you didn't know before?

Mike: Boy...I think we've definitely got that "older and wiser" thing going on. In some ways, we're the exact same people, yet we're much more articulate now and in touch with our feelings and what we need to happen out of a situation. Working together is a little easier now since we're able to step back and see how our interpersonal thing is going. And the respect is still there. Aaron was 16-18 years old when GO! happened, and I was 21. We were both so young. And now we're both on the west coast, married, regular jobs, each of us with no kids but two black female dogs. It's kind of scary.

Aaron: We have a better relationship than ever. Maturity helps in a big way. Back in the day (pardon the expression), if we had a disagreement, you could have counted on Mike throwing a snit for two days and me walking around the whole two days with a furrowed brow complaining to anyone who would listen. Now we actually talk about it one on one, plus we both know more about ourselves and what is worth fighting about, e.g. the color of the vinyl on the new record, versus stupid stuff, like which side of the stage to set up the guitar amp.



Usually I try to stay outside of any story I'm writing, but in this case, I really can't. When it comes to the ABC No Rio hardcore/punk scene of the early 1990s, I was as much a participant as an observer; and the reunion of the crucially important band GO! from that era had its genesis in an ABC No Rio retrospective I wrote in Jersey Beat a year ago to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Mike "Bullshit" Bromberg's hardcore shows there. GO!'s reunion show at ABC in July was more than just an exercise in nostalgia; it brought the band back into existence, as well as reuniting many old friends. Mike Bullshit, Aaron GO!, Steve, and Jimmy picked up where they left off; they've already recorded a new record and have plans to keep GO! going into the future. As for the past...well, that's a part of punk rock history, so Mike, Aaron, and I conversed by email and put together this interview to document what's been going on. One thing's for certain: Thomas Wolfe had it wrong. You can GO! home

MRR: It seems like those early years at ABC No Rio were a bonding ritual for a lot of people. Describe what 1990-1991 was like at ABC No Rio and what those years meant to you, both then and what you carry from those years now.

Mike: One goal with the GO! reunion show at ABC was to draw in all those people who were there in '90-'91 who wanted to re-connect with their friends. I'm so happy that was able to happen.

Aaron: Amazingly great to see everyone for the July show at ABC. Especially you, Jim. I don't know that any of us knew exactly what was happening at the time, and how special it was, but I will never forget it. It showed me the value of DIY and of pure energy expressed and shared in a positive way. I think your retrospective in Jersey Beat did a stellar job depicting the time and the feeling of ABC. I really enjoyed reading it and seeing the pictures.

Mike: That time was a very special time (which kind of sounds like a Chain of Strength song). I think I took it for granted a little bit as it was happening, but it was such a great group of people, and there were such great bands and energy and people just hanging out. I think for many people it was a nice scene to be a part of. It got a little cliquish, but I guess life works that way. Time isn't necessarily linear for me. Part of me is still there.

MRR: GO! was known for a lot of things but chief among them were the political and social issues of the lyrics. It's more than 15 years later. How far have we come? And why do you think there aren't more bands like GO! today speaking out about social and political issues?

Mike: Can't really speak for other bands—if they want to focus on being stabbed in the back or how life is hard and tough, or on the state of their emotions or whatever, hey, that's their thing. And I'd like to think we're more than just issues. But I'm reminded of the title of an Upright Citizens LP: Open Eyes, Open Ears, a Brain to Think and a Mouth to Speak. That guides my focus at times. Why not bring up topics that make people think? Like the fact that gay and lesbian people exist, and are active in the hardcore scene. Or the idea that women are reared to be in a tier behind men in so many ways. Or that this world, the environment and wildlife, are suffering greatly and need to be conserved and protected. This world we live in is so diverse and wonderful, yet there is so much to be discussed and worked on. Let's do that. And not every GO! song is about a social issue. On the new record, for example, both "Left" and "Taken" are about loss (but from opposite perspectives).

Aaron: The part about why other bands don't talk about these things really makes me wonder. Especially in punk and hardcore. I mean, there about a bazillion groups that talk about how much it sucks that their girlfriend broke up with them or alternately about death and destruction. I see this genre of music—punk/hardcore—uniquely suited to discuss bigger issues, about the world, its inequities, and how to make it better. Those are our roots and I feel it's somewhat our job to talk about the tough issues and bring them to light.

Mike: I think the world is better in general for gay and lesbian people. Not perfect. But definitely much better compared to 1990.

MRR: For fans from the old days, talk a little about your lives today.

Mike: I'm in San Jose, CA with my partner, two dogs, lemon tree, two orange trees and a peach tree. I work as a graphic designer, am really into old comic books (1940s-'60s, but current comics, too). I sold on eBay for like seven years and also publish some comic fanzines. I love collecting rare old HC 7" EPs, biking, friends, Thai food, etc. God, this sounds like a personal ad.

Aaron: Mike's place rocks. It's like he's retired or something. I mean, orange and lemon trees in the backyard. I work at Starbucks and hang out and drink coffee all day. My wife and I have two dogs too, but no lemon trees in our backyard. Maybe when we retire though. Life is much more different from when GO! was a main focus.

Mike: Meanwhile Steve and Jim are still in New York City, still playing in bands. Jim is in the Fresh Kills—kind of a challenge because they tour a lot and we have to juggle our schedules. Steve is in an Irish band, Shillelagh Law. Jim does graphic installations, and Steve is a New York City firefighter.

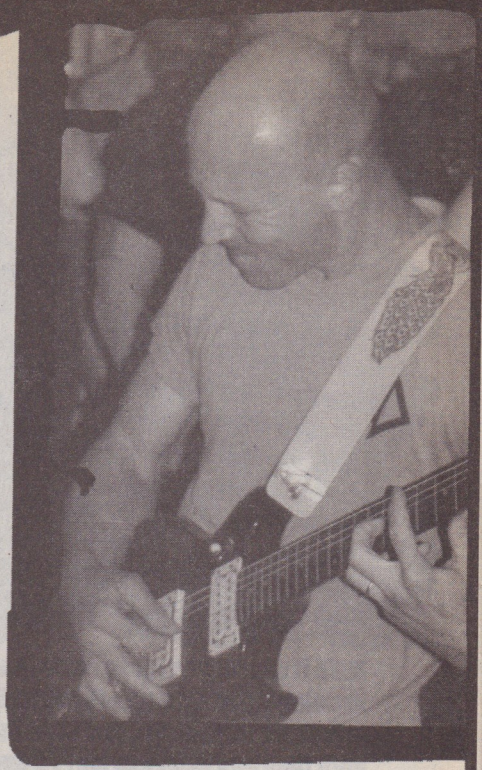
MRR: Mike, I know you've lost almost all interest in contemporary music—you didn't even know that Ted Leo had become a major star in indie rock when we first reconnected a year ago. How about Aaron? Do you still listen to new records, go to shows? For both of you, did getting back together as GO! create any interest in seeing what's going on in the hardcore and punk scenes today?

Aaron: I knew that Ted Leo had become a major rock star. Still amazed, and very impressed. I looked him up on the internet. He's still pretty hot.

Mike: Oh, yeah. I'm definitely paying more attention to new bands and reading up on what's current—way more than in the last twelve years. It's fun to be in touch with so many people again, to hear about everyone who is still there, and all the new people, too.

GO!

"Why not bring up topics that make people think? "



Aaron: I stay reasonably current with today's music, but not enough to know everything. I liked the groups we played with in New York recently, and I am interested in hearing more. It's made me want to find the punk record store in Seattle.

MRR: What is your favorite memory from any GO! show, and your favorite memory from any ABC No Rio show?

Mike: Oh, boy. This is one of those questions that are virtually impossible to answer. All the ABC shows were amazing. Playing Gilman St. in 1990 was the highlight of the US tour, no question. Touring Europe was like being a rock star, we were so well treated. That was 1991—I guess we were the first of the " newer" NYHC bands to head over there. At the last show, Aaron set his guitar on fire. Fuck. Playing Michigan in the lobby of a movie theatre—all the hardline kids walked out the moment I started talking about gay stuff. Playing that kid's garage in South Dakota. His mom asked me beforehand not to curse—so of course I didn't. I think our first "real" last show, which was just jam-packed full of people.

Aaron: The last show in Europe with guitar on fire was pretty intense. My advice to young aspiring hardcore guitarists: do not try that shit; you could burn the place down. When we played with Jawbreaker the first time at ABC, I think I found religion. Wow. And every single Rorschach show was like a chainsaw on fire thrown into a crowded room with no escape.

Mike: ABC No Rio? The one nighttime show I did, with Poison idea. Don't even ask me how I kept the police from shutting us down, but I actually kept them out of the club the three times they showed up. And all the basement shows, where you really had to be careful not to knock into something and really cut yourself. And trying to get the ice off the stairs in the winter! There was a parody of ABC No Rio in Penumbra, a parody magazine, that mentioned Bored Against, Citizens At Rest, Went! and some others, and of course my fanzine, Chickenshit Monthly instead of Bullshit Monthly. Once you get parodied, you know you've really accomplished something.

MRR: Is there anything else you'd like to tell people about your involvement with the ABC No Rio scene and the New York hardcore scene? What are you most proud of? Any regrets?

Mike: Ah, there're always regrets. Someone I didn't treat fairly. Some show I should've booked differently. But in general what we built was so positive, it overshadows everything else. I'm proud to have started the matinees at ABC, seeing what the place has turned into. It's humbling. I' m happy to have done Bullshit Monthly for so long—I think it gave a lot of exposure to bands who wouldn't have had it otherwise, and helped to influence other fanzines, and was also a great vehicle for me to get to know people and be a part of the scene in my own way. And printing in that BSM #20 that the fanzine was "Proud to Be Gay Owned and Operated" is something that I can never regret. Coming out in the hardcore scene meant a lot to so many people. It started a dialogue on gay and lesbian issues, and once that thinking starts, you can't hide it anymore.

Aaron: Good times, all around. You know, I wonder what exactly "the scene" has become. I found myself thinking about that when we were in New York in July. When we saw all the friends from the old days, it was clear that we all had a kinship that could never be taken away. But I left New York wondering about the younger participants in the scene. I guess it's just from not being at the shows week in and week out, but I am curious to know how the kids of today will leave their mark on the scene. Or will they leave a mark?

**"Kept me sane. Kept me unaware.
Kept me locked up.
Kept me quiet Kept me well fed...
Always kept dependent."**

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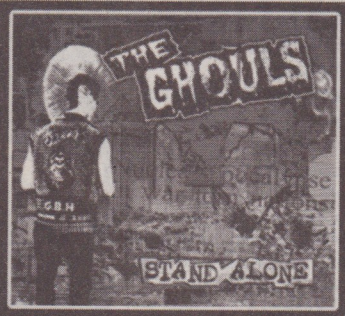

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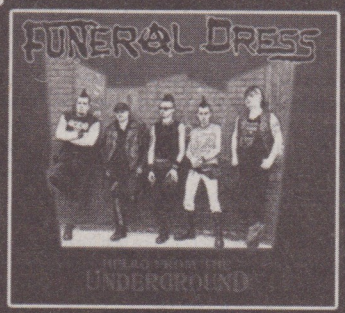

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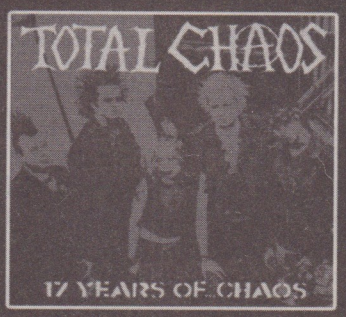

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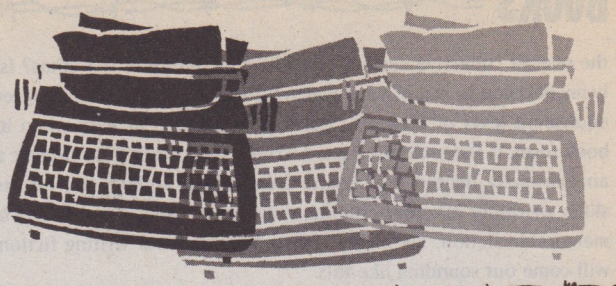


Dreamwhip #14
Bill Brown
336 pages • $10.00
Microcosm
311 N. Ivy St. basement
Portland, OR 97227
www.microcosmpublishing.com

Bill Brown's *Dreamwhip #14* is a travel zine in book form. I'm in love with this little book. Furthermore, I have no idea how I've missed the previous thirteen issues of Bill Brown's zine. I have some catching up to do. While initially flipping through *Dreamwhip*, I was instantly charmed by the illustrations, including painstaking sketches of train stations, motels, and diners, and amusing cartoons. The index was also promising, with entries such as "corn-dog, as trade for pot" and "jacuzzi, trucker" and "skin rashes, patron saint of." I read *Dreamwhip* in two sittings, because I couldn't bear to put it down. I also read at least half of it out loud because I just had to share it. (Sorry, Cam.) The book is, to say the least, right up my alley. Bill seems to appreciate inhabiting dusty little corners of the world a little longer than most people would prefer, and is able to convey an engaging combination of humor and loneliness. If that sounds bleak, think again. The result is often laugh-out-loud funny. I was tickled by Bill's fear that a friends's cat considered him a mooch. "Of course, it takes a lot of nerve for a pet cat to be calling anyone a mooch, but that's beside the point." Another highlight was Bill's illustrated account of a visit to a haunted house in Illinois that had me laughing so hard that it was difficult to read aloud, and simultaneously wondering if a trip from Reno to Illinois simply to go to a wacky (and possibly dangerous) roadside attraction is impractical. That story alone is worth the price of the book. Get this. (P.S. Bill, is there a page 312?)

—Tress

Afterlife Battlefield
Johnny Ostentatious
246 pgs • $10.00
Active Bladder
PO Box 24607
Philadelphia, PA 19111
www.activebladder.com

I wouldn't necessarily say that I have a *problem* with co-dependency (per-se), but like all people I have at least a small disposition towards one form or another of it. That said...

Afterlife Battlefield, the new self-published novel by "punk" author Johnny Ostentatious, kinda defies genre, at least I wouldn't be able to know what section in a bookstore to stick it. I get the impression that it was intended to be included in the horror genre, based partially on his thanking of Stephen King as a primary inspiration, as well as many elements of the story, but I'd personally consider it science fiction. But then again, none of the science is given any remote explanation (a key element of *science* fiction), history, or background (essentials for most types of fantasy fiction)... *Un-science* fiction? To be honest, after the *Necronomicon* reference on the back cover I was expecting a more Lovecraft-esque feeling (I'm one of those people that thinks that the horror genre basically begins and ends with Lovecraft), but let me tell ya, I was pretty let down. It was about as "horrifying" as a bowl of Lucky Charms.

In Johnny Ostentatious' version of the metaphysical order those who commit suicide find themselves in a far-off realm named Holcyon where a cosmic battle is taking place between an army of them (the suicides that is, called Mordavers) and their supposedly villainous antagonists the Knopfs and Bantams (presumably references to the publishers). The Mordaver army has been assembled by Anubis and Medusa (of Egyptian and Greek mythologies, respectively) to defend the apparently very real God who is currently hibernating to replenish his powers before his next great work. The story specifically follows Zack, a depressed, NOFX-quoting punk who ends his life to escape the misery of everyday monotony (*shit*, I'd commit suicide too is I were caught wearing a Lawrence Arms shirt!), and Melody, a distraught indie-rocking Australian who purposely fed herself to a crocodile in the outback to escape a failed relationship. Upon meeting each other in the "afterlife," the two are quickly recruited by a dude on a flying tarantula and are enlisted along side thousands of other suicides in the cosmic defense of the "Nexus." The story culminates in an epic (epically *boring*) battle between the antithetical forces of good and evil on the "afterlife battlefield".

While some aspects of the plot are in fact interesting (though I'm straining to try and think of one), not enough really happens in the overall story to make it much of a page-turner. Both the subject matter and quick story-telling style make the story akin to a true old school pulp novel, yet even in those terms it's still mostly forgettable. Little substance and a lot of filler in the form of stale descriptions and unfortunately asinine dialogue. None of the characters are interesting, and many seem built up completely from cliché stereotypes (a born-again Christian with dirty dark secrets, and a radical fundamentalist Muslim whose ability to reason is hindered by his faith, to name a few). Truth be told (the *truth* of my *opinion* that is), Zack, the protagonist, is rather obnoxious and prone to brainlessly puerile babble in the form of what I get the feeling are supposed to be snappy comebacks, put-downs and youthful wit. Ostentatious' writing is at times almost like a severely stunted and tedious version of Kurt Vonnegut's style. But unlike Vonnegut, the humor (which there were almost constant attempts at) consistently falls completely on its face. It's quite pathetic really. Quite a bit of the humor relies on and functions off of a highly media referential model. This makes the humor inherently ephemeral, a quality that basically excludes it from ever standing up to the test of time (South Park will probably suffer a similar fate). I felt like I was witnessing the growth of semiotic bacteria in a petri dish... its life span was short.

Am I being overly critical? Probably...I really don't want to sound pretentious or arrogant (and I know I do), but I've got admittedly high standards for reading material. Who wouldn't? There is an immense world of excellent literature out there, so why settle for mediocrity? Did this book contribute to

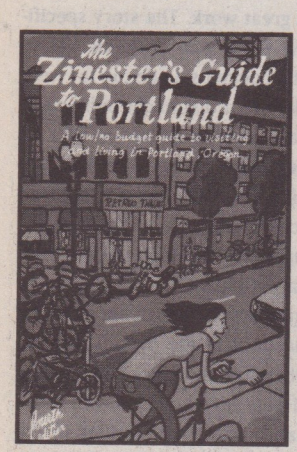
the overall collective aesthetic and literary nature of the ethos? Is that really my decision to make? I can watch B-films ad infinitum, but appreciating the equivalent level of *kitsch* (to put it politely) isn't as easy when it comes in book form. Is Ostentatious a good writer? He certainly has prosaic ability (yet an extremely limited lexical and grammatical ability), but his story-telling skills, or rather his story-*creating* skills, aren't what they need to be to write memorable fiction. My biggest personal fear about writing fiction is that it will come out sounding like this.

When I picked up *Afterlife Battlefield*, stuck in it was a brief press sheet with a couple positive sounding quotes (including one from MRR) regarding Ostentatious' previous books. So apparently other people dig this stuff. And this is where my co-dependency comes in... immediately after reading *Afterlife Battlefield* I started to feel bad about giving it a bad review. It seemed like yelling at a seven-year old because his finger paintings aren't coming out more perfect looking. Mediocre writing is in itself rather harmless, so why attack it with a malicious and calloused sounding review? What I'm trying to say is that I felt guilty about my honest opinion. Co-dependent feelings towards someone I've never even met, when I separated them from all other feelings, shine brightly in all their dysfunctional glory. The book sucks, plain and simple. There. I said it. I feel better now.

If you want awesome pulp-fiction read H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard or Clark Ashton Smith. You can thank me for it later.

P.S. Johnny, *Zontar, the Thing From Venus* never had a movie poster, it was a made for TV movie (as were almost all of Larry Buchanan's movies from that period.)

—Spencer Horne



Zinester's Guide To Portland 2007
Shawn Granton and Nate Beaty
128 pgs • $5
Microcosm Publishing
311 N. Ivy St. Basement
Portland, OR 97227
www.microcosmpublishing.com

Ah, the reason I moved away from Portland, my birthplace and home for nineteen years. In Portland, it's now cliché to go drink coffee at some café, ride your clunky Schwinn home to your typewriter and pour your heart out into a per-zine. The city is so saturated in "alternative culture" that it has become status quo and no longer fun. I have tried to let Portland go like you would anything that has gone past the point of no return. Like an ex-girlfriend with cancer. Once they destroyed the Northwest Industrial District, I had to leave town.

Like the city itself, *The Zinester's Guide to Portland* has fleeting moments of authenticity, but most of the time it just lists things that are already established as "cool." When I first saw this thing, I became enraged, what with the pretentious name and all and the whole selling-me-back-my-culture thing. But there are some redeeming qualities, like the long article about hiking (something you don't consume) or the beautifully hand-drawn illustrations done by various artists. Damn, Portland looks good in black ink.

The editors seem to have lived here a long time, at least long enough to know how Portland used to be before the wall was breeched and the yuppie Huns stormed the castle. It is written in the manner of how I would tell a visiting friend what to see or do. Except that I would omit most of the coffee shops.

However, the guide is very Southeast-centric. Southeast was never "where it's at" in my book. There are a lot of coffee shops painted purple and the Hawthorne district is merely a clean-cut version of Haight Street. I don't know why there are twenty pages dedicated to this part of town versus the eleven to Northeast (my home quadrant) and the six to North. I guess North Portland isn't that zinester-ish, which is fine by me.

North Portland, most notably the Mississippi area, has been gentrified beyond recognition. First came the punks and queers (Mississippi House, Clown House, me), then came the zinesters (Fresh Pot—admit it, you went there when it was the only coffee shop) and then finally the yuppies (everything else). You know the process. I appreciated that they listed very few businesses on Mississippi, although they did mention Bridge City Comics, which happens to be located in a hideous, brand-spanking new micro strip mall made of cinderblocks and painted in shades of Pottery Barn. Shame on them.

Aside from the heavy gentrification topic, I do have a few nit picky things to point out. They didn't mention the best sushi house in town, possibly the world! Raw fish comes around on a Lionel train! How could they miss this? And it's cheap cheap cheap!

And then they dissed my favorite late night hang out, the 24 Hour Hotcake House. Horrible food my ass! It's regular diner fare. What do you expect? Sorry it's not gourmet vegan. But come on, self-serve coffee! We would roll up in there around one am, load up on all you can drink coffee and hit the nearby train yards with cans of spray paint. Also it's the perfect place to go after getting off a twelve-hour train ride.

One more thing: the guide says that the Hawthorne Bridge is possibly Portlanders' favorite bridge. I will say that it is not. The St. Johns is much more beloved than the Hawthorne, which before 1998 was a rusty piece of shit. Us real-deal Portlanders love the Burnside, Broadway, and Steel (we were using that fucker long before the pansy-ass lower deck was opened) much more than that hippy bridge down south.

Further, I question the need for this book. Of all cities a zinester needs no guide for, it is Portland. It has been well documented by countless zines. Any zinester would fair better to read an anthology of Portland zines or just contact their Portland pen pal.

This book seems like one more attempt at making a profit off of Portland's "cool" reputation. The problem with this and all alternative guidebooks is once you list something in a guidebook it's no longer special or unique. It's done. Over. When was the last time a Lonely Planet guide (which, by the way, it was compared to on the press release that came with the book) was useful? The best secrets are the ones you find, not the ones you read about.

—Damian

Applicant
Jesse Reklaw
48 pgs • $4
Microcosm
311 N. Ivy St. basement
Portland, OR 97227
www.microcosmpublishing.com

You all might be familiar with *Applicant* as a zine, put out by Microcosm at some point in the near past, and here it is reissued as a book! Basically *Applicant* is a collection of photos from PhD applicants for a biology program from the mid-'60s to mid-'70s, accompanied by excerpts from their recommendation letters. This sounds okay, but in truth this is one fucking amazing book—partly an interesting found artifact, partly a commentary on society from 1965-75. I can't really do justice to it just by describing it, but you should really go out and get at least one copy of this book. It's cheap, it's amazing, and your friends will probably borrow it and never return it.

—Thera Webb

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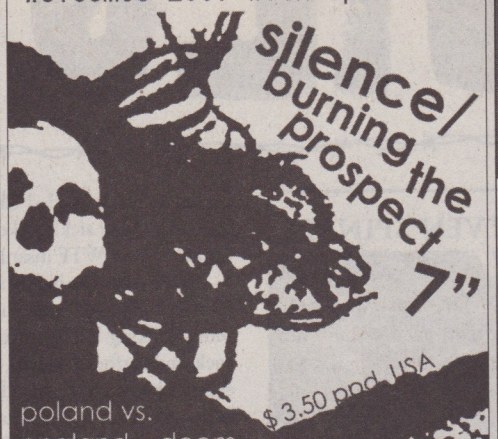

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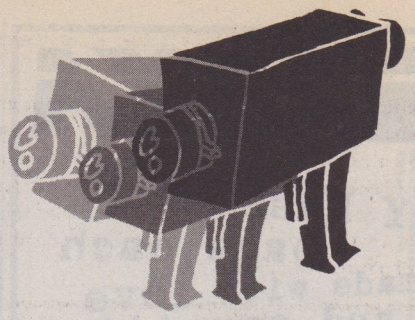


FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI

GOLDEN FLOWERS AND CRIMSON ARMOR

There's no evidence of widespread drug use in ancient China, but you might have second thoughts about this after seeing **Curse of the Golden Flower**. Director Zhang Yimou probably holds the same view, despite the over-the-top extravagance of this opus. It's to his considerable credit that a number of scenes come off as being almost believable.

As the camera wanders through the imperial palace, we see walls and columns painted ceiling to floor with a rainbow of wild colors. The floors are adorned by wall-to-wall oriental carpets for thousands of square yards. Clearly, these scenes were photoshopped into reality, but when we step into the living quarters of the main characters, anything less than gold and silk is bad taste. There's gold-embroidered costumes for the Emperor (Chow Yun-Fat) and Empress (Gong Li), and textured silk for everybody else.

Despite the luxury, the situation for the Empress is troubling. Every day, an army of herbologists pull leaves and bark from cabinets that rise to the ceiling, grind and strain them, steep them into pots, and boil them down to maybe half a cup of medicine for the Empress, The Emperor says she's suffering from anemia, and his word is law. The Empress suspects foul play when she has to fight away nervous fits that follow her medicine.

There's little she can do but continue drinking the vile green liquid, which a confederate in the palace confirms contains a bark extract that will cause madness within a few weeks. Not drinking the medicine would be an affront to the Emperor, and that's punishable by...well, whatever he wants.

Gong Li's roles have almost always been independent, sometimes diffident women who break with ironclad Chinese tradition—often with tragic results. But as the Empress in **The Curse of the Golden Flower**, things get downright kinky.

As the decadent Tang dynasty rolls into its dying days, the Emperor is intent on enjoying the Chrysanthemum Festival with his sons, now all home from military campaigns. The main square is choked with pots of chrysanthemums, like a sea of gold. Prince Jai (Jay Chou) is pleased to be back with his mother and father, and maybe even more pleased to be able to shed a thick shell of armor he's lived in for three years. On the other hand, Crown Prince Yan (Liu Ye) has found solace in a love affair with the Empress—his mother from the Emperor's first wife.

Things get more complicated, as they often do with the recent Zhang Yimou films **(Hero, House of Flying Daggers)**.

In recent days, Prince Wan has been involved in a forbidden intrigue with Chan (Li Man), the beautiful daughter of the Imperial Doctor (Ni Dahong). This doesn't escape the eyes and ears of the Empress, who's doubly pleased with this turn of events. Not only can she turn Prince Wan against the Emperor, but Chan is also the one charged concocting the Empress's green poison. With her faculties slipping every day, she must conceive of a countermeasure that will save her life and, ideally, punish the Emperor in a way that counts.

Curse of the Golden Flower isn't content to render its action subtly like, say, **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon**. The palace spectacle means Zhang Yimou has to make the climactic battles even more extravagant. In one remarkable sequence, black hooded Chinese ninja descend from the sky on a mountain inn, throwing flying sickles like boomerangs to slice the enemy. Fanciful? Yes, but it works as sheer WTF insanity.

The inevitable battle scenes that follow involve such huge masses of soldiers—filling every molecule of on-screen real estate—that opposing forces come across looking like histograms, with waves of black and golden armor pushing back and forth; or maybe like the unreal battles fought in a video game, with expendable masses of soldiers being killed, replaced, crushing the enemy, and falling back again, with human lives as expendable as a bunch of pixels.

In **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon**, Chow Yun-Fat was a dull substitute for Jet Li, who was originally slated for the role; as it is, it's hard to forget Chow Yun-Fat's gun-slinging roles in contemporary films like **The Killer** and **Hard Boiled**. Zhang Yimou does the best with what he's given, but it's hard to compete with a world-class talent like Gong Li, and the well-cast supporting actors.

If you're familiar with Hong Kong action cinema, **Curse's** excesses will be easier to forgive. An army of archers delivers an assault that blackens the sky. An army of ninja-types can fall from the sky like spiders and exact precise kills on a hapless opponent. Swordsmen display impossible acrobatics and near-perfect techniques to fillet the enemy. Most do all this wearing metal armor, and sometimes even telling a joke or two. **The Curse of the Golden Flower** is less about realism than spectacle, and the effects department has afforded this film with the kind of spectacle that elicits gasps.

Like Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige **(Yellow Earth, Farewell My Concubine)** comes from a fifth generation of Chinese filmmakers whose work has been banned or censured. Now established names, they're involved with the grand filmmaking they'd have thought inconceivable before. Chen Kaige has been ranked among China's classiest Chinese directors, and his most daring attempt at epic period filmmaking comes with **The Promise (**also released as **The Master of the Crimson Armor)**, which owes more to the spirit of HK filmmaking. But it stands out in one particular way; at $34 million, it ranks as the most expensive Chinese film ever made. Both films competed or a chance to be China's official entry for the Academy Award for foreign feature.

Instead of Zhang Yimou's insanely colored interior shots, Kaige's visuals seem to take place in the real world. The hues are so vivid that it seems a filter has been taken from in front of the screen (and our eyes). But the computer imaging is even more extensive here in **Curse...**

The rules of Chinese fantasy usually proceed from the presumption that life—even for spirits—proceeds along a path of despair and ill-fated-ness. As a result, there's a spirit of melancholy here that sometimes stands in contrast to the eye-candy visuals. Let it be said that **The Promise** survives, not so much on plot as on its eye-candy visuals.

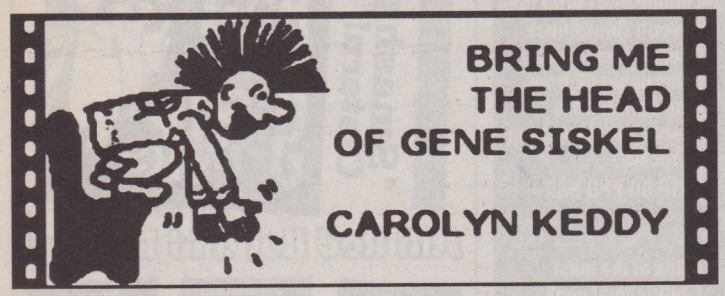
General Guangmin (Hiroyuki Sanada) finds himself facing a much larger army of barbarians in Horseshoe Gorge. So, he sends a group of expendable slaves to crawl along the gorge, like animals, and a herd of buffalo is roused to trample over everyone. A powerful slave, Kunlun (Dong Jang-Gun) escapes being trampled, and saves the day with his unnatural speed. The General presses Kunlun into his service—a great advancement, for now Kunlun can eat.

But the General's good fortune doesn't last forever. He comes to meet a mysterious sprite who informs him of his fate, which even by the standards of Chinese storytelling isn't very promising. It comes down to whether the general can overcome fate—by doing what everyone knows is impossible.

Although the film's soundtrack is overblown at times, it mostly captures the flavor of the moment. More happily, the elaborate plot has the feel of a vintage Chinese novel (albeit tastefully edited), and manages to be continually arresting. Some fantasy sequences made me sit back and gasp.

As you've probably noticed from the actors' names, it's a fairly well known cast (by Asian standards), hailing from several different countries. As with early Fellini films, all of the dialogue is dubbed in the studio, a decision that leads to a

disconcerting disconnect between the words and the characters' mouths. In epic scenes, you don't notice; but most of the time, it seems that the spirit of fantasy relates mostly to the characters' talents at ventriloquism. As with **The Emperor and the Assassin**, the director employs spectacle to great success. The previous film was more realistic and tightly structured, but his latest has its own thrilling moments. True, some of the effects weren't quite up to par…but, uh, what do you expect for a mere $34 million?



…And The Rest Is History

As the President of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™, it is that time of the year when I release our list of best films of 2006 in order to influence Academy nominations. Elsewhere in this issue of Maximum Rock N Roll the music reviewers are listing their favorite records so why not join in on the fun? I willingly didn't see all of the films everyone seemed to be talking about this past year. In fact, every time someone tells me to see **Little Miss Sunshine** equals one more month I will put off seeing the film. At this rate it could be years before I get around to it. Quirky just isn't on my agenda for 2007. Also, I am sure **The Queen** is a masterpiece of acting, but I am not as fascinated by the royal family as the rest of the world seems to be. Why would I care how Queen Elizabeth dealt with the death of Princess Diana? Those movies have been over reviewed anyway.

Here is the list of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™ best films of 2006.

V For Vendetta:

I often hear about people talking about how films should be escapist fantasies that take you away from the worries of everyday life. My fantasies don't involve pirates, hobbits or space age deities. My fantasies involve more realistic things like the people rising up to overthrow a corrupt fascistic government. **V For Vendetta** captures it with a riveting story of revenge, betrayal, and destiny. What a nice idea.

New York Doll:

The heartbreaking story of Arthur "Killer" Kane. After the demise of the New York Dolls, his excessive drinking and his failed attempts at starting another band, Kane becomes a Mormon librarian. Kane isn't the most famous of the New York Dolls, but that doesn't keep his story from being the most riveting. Musicians overdose on drugs all the time. It's a cliché. Kane settles in to Mormon life, keeping his musical past secret from his coworkers, yet he upholds a desire that he will get to play music again. His bass is in the pawnshop, but he continually pays the interest to keep it. Then he gets the call that Morrissey wants the New York Dolls to play a reunion show.

We Jam Econo: The Story of The Minutemen:

This documentary uses all the music documentary cliches: interviews while driving to the location "where it all started," talking heads reminiscing about how great it was "back in the day" and Henry Rollins. Yet, the story transcends all that. Two kids who grew up together are encouraged to play music by one's mother. They get added to a punk gig simply by saying they have a band and soon their band is releasing the second record on the new record label SST. **We Jam Econo** has the extra advantage of there being a lot of footage of the band, including a really fun interview with them. The DVD includes music videos, live footage and the complete interview.

Bad Brains: Live at CBGB 1982:

While not exactly a film per se, I'd rather watch Bad Brains at their peak live than have to listen to other musicians or even current day H.R. tell me about how great they were back then. Actions speak louder than words. Yes, I was fortunate enough to see them back then (not at CBGB) so I know how great they were. This is just a pleasant reminder for the old punks and a history lesson for those who missed it. The crowd watching is great too. This is how '80s punks really looked, kids. Even when Bad Brains play one their reggae songs you can't help but being entertained by the crowd reaction.

Under Review DVD series:

I include the **Under Review** DVDs not because they are great filmmaking. They are far from it. They are simply the most fun you will have watching a music documentary. But don't watch them alone. Get a group of friends together with a bunch of snacks and cocktails and just let loose. Whenever a critic says something stupid, and they will, yell at the screen. Laugh out loud, you won't be able to help it. Then you can stop and catch your breath when the doc shows some footage of the band performing or the rare interview with a periphery member of the band. The Velvet Underground DVD somehow managed to get an interview with drummer Mo Tucker. The better ones in the series are the Velvet Underground, Captain Beefheart, and Syd Barrett. Joy Division was the biggest disappointment. They haven't found the right annoying critics for the punk ones yet.

Now on to new business.

When I was in junior high school, there was a movie theater The Strand in my hometown of Quincy, MA that showed music and horror films. The bills were directed at the local kids who went to the theater religiously every Friday and Saturday night. The place was always packed. In 1981 the theater booked The Plasmatics to play there. Bands never played in Quincy since it is a city right next to Boston. Everyone would just play Boston. Since I was too young, I hadn't yet figured out a way to go to shows in Boston. So I was going to the Plasmatics show. My mother told me I wasn't, but it was only a ten-minute walk from my house. I was going. Unfortunately, the show never happened since the Quincy City Council revoked the theater's entertainment license for the weekend.

What seems like a weird little side note in my personal musical history is amazingly covered in **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll**, a new documentary about the legendary band. The film covers in minute detail every aspect of the ten-year existence of the band. Rod Swenson and Wendy O. Williams formed the Plasmatics as an art statement. Swenson wrote the lyrics and designed the album art. Williams performed the music and the stunts. Strangely, Swenson does not appear in the film. I suspect that producer/director Randy Shooter is actually a pseudonym for Swenson since he used multiple names on credits for many of the Plasmatics albums. The film covers their humble punk beginnings, the rising popularity, the run-ins with the law, the band line-ups changes, and their transformation into a metal band. It is an engrossing story.

There is lots of footage of the band blowing stuff up and chainsawing guitars. Even though every interviewee talks about how influential the band's music was, it takes twenty minutes to actually hear a song in the film, other than the music playing in the background. The song "Butcher Baby" isn't included in the documentary, but as a cool feature. A box appears on the screen, you click enter on the remote and watch the entire music video. Then you can go back to the documentary where you left off. This happens regularly throughout the doc. It is something all band documentaries should incorporate. The DVD also allows you to watch just the videos.

There are two technical things about **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll** that make the film hard to watch. The first is the voice-over narration. The female narrator's voice is edited in an unnatural way. It sounds like she is talking extremely fast without ever taking a breath. No one talks like that. Remember when Laraine Newman would imitate a newscaster on SNL? It's like that. The information the narrator is sharing about the band comes at you at such speed that it is hard to take it all in.

The other technical problem is one you find a lot in modern documentaries. The editing of the interview subjects result in a series of annoying jump cuts. It is particularly excessive in **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll**. Some of the people's sentences are so cut up the person pops back and forth for single words. Even an interview with Wendy O. Williams is cut this way. It is utterly annoying.

Overall, **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll** is a very thorough documentary. Every thing you might need to know about the band is covered. Even that little incident in Quincy that probably few remember or even care about. (www.mvdvisual.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrock-nroll.com. I will go see it.

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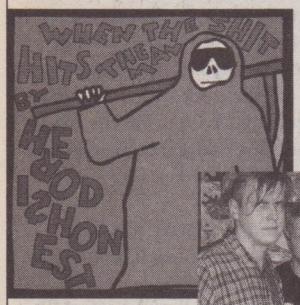

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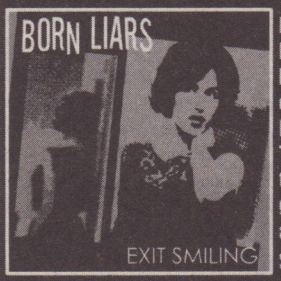

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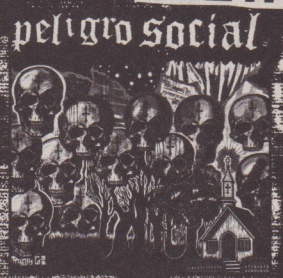

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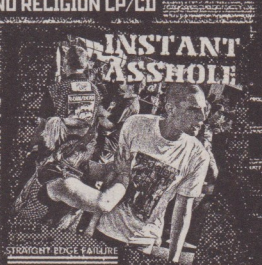

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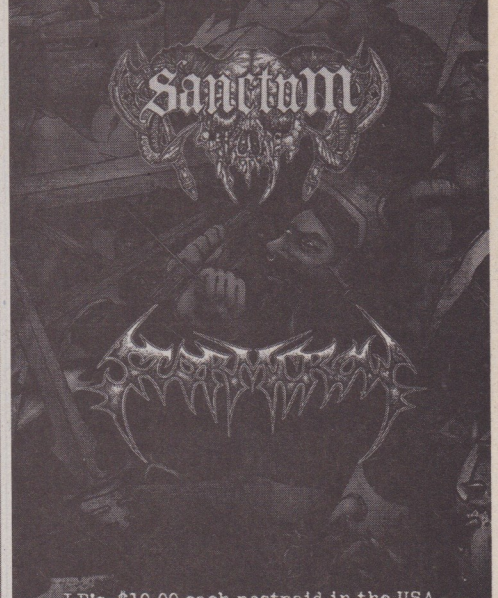

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1984 / BLACK BETSY – split CD

Brutally tough split CD of hard brutal beatdown-core brutality! 1984, from the US, leads things off with four fairly unremarkable tracks—monotonous songwriting and too much open-E metal damage for my delicate sensibilities, I'm afraid. My curiosity was piqued at what might possibly be construed as an anti-war song, but since there were no lyrics printed, I can't confirm. Finland's BLACK BETSY is a step up, both in terms of songs and production. They don't really improve on the NYHC style first demonstrated by bands like SICK OF IT ALL and MADBALL, but do a good rendition thereof. The vocalist has a very affected and slightly amusing delivery, which is actually quite distinctive and sets the band apart amongst the swirling moshpit of their peers. I'd probably get my scrawny ass stomped to paste in a matter of seconds at one of their shows, but am satisfied to privately enjoy their five tracks in the safety of my bedroom. (CS)
(Hell's Tone, PO Box 162, 53101 LPR, FINLAND, www.lprhardcore.net/htr)

THE 20 BELOWS – "Headaches and Moodswings" CD

A band from Denmark that goes for that QUEERS and SCREECHING WEASEL sound and hits the mark. Tight, energetic playing with catchy songs. Fans of the GROOVIE GHOULIES and the TRAVOLTAS will like this too. Overall, an impressive debut from the label that brought us the UNLOVABLES and the ERGS. (RL)
(Whoa Oh, www.whoaohrecords.com)

AFFLUENTE – "Libera Fame" CD

This CD of Italian anarcho-HC starts promisingly enough when a catchy Swedish hardcore riff kicks in after a lengthy spoken-word intro. If things continued in this direction over the whole album, it probably would have ended up with a pretty positive review, with only the usual points off for sterile over-production common to CD-only releases. Then the metal-riffage started to seep in. Hmm… Then the heavy mosh-breakdown hit. Uh oh. Then the band broke out their street punk number… By the time the guitarist started rockin' out on a wah pedal somewhere around track twelve, I was already completely lost. Granted, there's something to be said for incorporating a number of influences into your sound. But this just seems like a bunch of musicians—albeit talented ones—each going off in their own direction, with no attempt made to write cohesive songs. The result is a forgettable mish-mash. It's too bad, 'cause there are some good moments here and there, and I imagine the lyrics (all in Italian) are right-on and the band has their hearts in the right place… (CS)
(SOA, Paolo Petralia, Via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Roma, ITALY, www.soarecords.it)

AFGANISTAN YE-YE'S / ERANTZUN – split EP

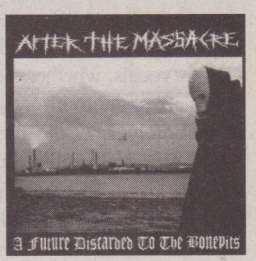
Two bands from Spain, or possibly the Basque region. The AFGANISTAN YE-YE'S side of this is wild, fun, fast, thrashy, and confusing as hell. Most of the songs are in Spanish, but the lyric sheet comes with translations into Basque as well as something else—¿maybe Catalán? Anyway, the music is great and unique: really cool bass parts, crazed vocals, and weird yet solid song structures. Reminds me of some of the DEAD KENNEDYS' shining moments, but way more hardcore. ERANTZUN's side starts with a spoken word piece that is definitely Basque. Their sound is very straightforward, but totally fucking awesome; D-beat brutality with musical nuance that the genre so often lacks, featuring screeching vocals that compete with buzzsaw guitar mania in a way that could make Ken Sanderson write a run-on sentence that would put this one to shame. In short, this record kicks ass! (PC)
(Reek of Putrefaction, PO Box 245, 48960 Galdacano, [Vizcaya] SPAIN, www.reekofputrefaction.galeon.com)

AFTER THE MASSACRE – CD

If you are fiending for some snotty crust, AFTER THE MASSACRE is dirty and raw, plays with some style, and pretty much brings the chaos. This CD contains ten tracks and is mostly rad, except maybe for some unnecessary blast beats. The recording is lo-fi, and the sound is kind of like if you smashed two beer bottles on the side of your head and then threw on a SCURVY DOGS record. Dang, one of the tracks sounds like EL DOPA too, that one song is the best one they got. (WK)
(SOA, Paolo Petralia, Via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Roma, ITALY, www.soarecords.it)

AGATHOCLES – "Mincer" LP

Brand new…err wait, this album was just released but AGATHOCLES has had time to release three things in the time it took for this to travel from Germany to MRR. Jokes aside (and they *have* had three other releases recently, I didn't make that up) this is a new full length from Belgian



grindcore legends who have 100+ releases in 20+ years. For those who don't know (but how could you not? 20+ years of grind, and hell they must have releases on labels in almost every country. I know they have releases from labels that were in countries that no longer exist!), AGATHOCLES plays straightforward, political as fuck, old school grindcore. Side A goes a little slow with some non-grind tracks like "Forced to Masturbate," but most of this LP is dirty, mincing grindcore. I've always liked these guys and this record is no different. Mince! (MH)
(Power It Up, Zum Holzeelde 12, 31226 Piene, GERMANY, www.power-it-up.de)

AGE – "The Spider Rules Your Emotions" EP

Holy shit, this thing fucking rips! Blasting fast metallic crust from Japan that reminds me of bands like SDS. If the massive wall of distortion doesn't crush you then those fiercely growling vocals will. Add in some kick ass cover art and the fact that the lyrics are displayed in English and Japanese and you have got yourself a top notch release. This is an essential purchase for all you patch wearing crust heads out there. (RC)
(Black Water, PO Box 5223, Portland, OR 97208)

AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE / IRON LUNG – split EP

Who says that bands that consist of only two members are not capable of laying slaughter to your ears? Not me…quite the contrary in fact. IRON LUNG starts things off with their patented chop to the throat riff assault. There is no stopping the heaviness of those throbbing rhythms and vicious vocals, whether they are slow and pounding or are about to hit hyper speed. IRON LUNG is definitely one of my faves. AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE follows up with some crazy fast metallic grind. Technical time changes galore and those ear shredding vocals can't be missed. On top of it all, the fold out cover and artwork and packaging are all top notch. Hell, the grey vinyl even matches the color of the artwork. This is a perfect EP to start the New Year buying season off right. (RC)
(Missing Link, Basement 405 Bourke St, Melbourne 3000, Victoria, AUSTRALIA, www.missinglink.net.au)

AMEN 81 – "Corpus Christi 1995-1999" 2xLP

A forty-track double LP compiling the early years of one of Germany's best underground hardcore bands, including demo tracks, their debut 7", the *...Zurück aus Tasmanien* LP and *Stadtfeind* 10". This has variable but largely high quality recording quality. AMEN 81 has often mutated stylistically and this release highlights this more severely than their periodic great LPs as the changes—slipped in side by side on this retrospective—are in greater contrast. This ranges from SEEIN' RED style, drum-driven, throttling thrash to metallic INFEST "Fetch The Pliers" dirge to guitar driven, melodic, mid-tempo, classic '80 Deutsch hardcore punk with sung vocals. Nicely packaged with complete lyrics... but entirely in German, with no translation!! Still, this is a great retrospective of a band with an interesting evolution. (KS)
(Twisted Chords, Reutweg 1 A, 76327 Pfinztal, GERMANY, www.twistedchords.de)

AMERICA'S DIRTY THIRTYS – "Movement For Tomorrow" CD

Thick political hardcore from Northern California, though sounding very much like Portland bands of yore; think DEPRIVED or RESIST or even Sweden's DISKONTO. This band is more CONFLICT than DISCHARGE, which suits me fine as we are awash with Disbands these days. I dug all those old bands back in the day and I still dig the sound now. Really good stuff, although it would have been nice to have the lyrics. (TB)
(Yellow Dog, PO Box 550208, 10372 Berlin, GERMANY)

ARGUE DAMNATION – "Re-Cycle Old Pure Hardcore Punk Scum 1994-2003" CD

This is a near discographical release from this long-running Japanese hardcore band (it includes everything but cassette-only releases), and while a bit long to listen to in one sitting, is a cool document of these "political hardcore thrashers." Not nearly as noisy as some other well-known Japanese black-clad punx, ARGUE DAMNATION will nonetheless surely find welcome among fans of other MCR Records fare as well as other '90s political DIY hardcore. They play fast (but never blur into any territory past thrash), and they have some great, catchy mid-tempo parts as well, and even some weirdo randomness here and there. This made me want to pull out some of their old vinyl to get (re)acquainted with. Overall, this is a cool look at this good (though admittedly not great) hardcore band. (GN)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto, 624-0913, JAPAN)

ARMAGEDOM / BOMBENALARM – split EP

Two tracks from Germany's BOMBENALARM are throaty-vocalled, FROM ASHES RISE styled, complex metallic hardcore songs that charge steadily at a fast pace, balanced with TRAGEDY-esque guitar melodies. The gruff vocals singing in English and German give the tracks a distinctive flare. ARMAGEDOM from Brazil plunges into new levels of lo-fi with two speed metal-ish tracks with barked vocals and wailing guitar solos and riffing, which is segmented by such an offbeat recording that it gives the track unique character. Solid. (KS)
(Hate, PO Box 105824, 28058 Bremen, GERMANY, www.haterecords.net)

ASSHOLE PARADE – "Embers" CD

Unbelievably, this is ASSHOLE PARADE's first real full length, even though they became one of the most important powerviolence/thrash bands of the late '90s. I guess this is their "back from the dead" release, which is OK by me as I've always been a fan of their noise, so I'm happy to have 'em back. No let up since their early records (what, ten years ago?), this is full-bore thrash from start to finish. Less spastic thrash than before, maybe a little more controlled with tighter production. There is almost a straight edge on warp speed feel to some of the tracks that I dig, like "Nailed To The X Box," then it's full on SPAZZ style blast. As with prior releases the lyrics are smart, funny, and on point. 21 songs (few over a minute) with a rip-roaring SEPTIC DEATH cover make this quite a comeback. (TB)
(No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL, 32604)

ATOMGEVITTER / FILTHPACT – split LP

I'm going back and forth with the FILTHPACT side of this split. They have good riffs, but some songs just fall short. It could be because of the drumming—the drummer dude is playing mid-paced back and forth beats when he should be raging through these songs with non-stop blasting. Other than this has a more metal than crust sound, lots of pitch harmonics, a shit load of bad breakdowns, and gruff, spit-out vocals. It's not bad but not my top pick. ATOMGEVITTER has nine fast hardcore tunes, goofy but not too over the top. The vocals remind me of DAS OATH at times and they go well with the music, but I get the feeling that not too much time goes into the song writing, as some stuff they try to pull off does not go well. (NE)
(Blackbox, www.blackboxrecords.co.uk)

BASTARD – "Wind of Pain" LP

This bootleg 12" contains arguably the best Japanese hardcore record of all time, the *Wind of Pain* LP, along with all the tracks from the legendary *Controlled in the Frame* EP and the *Triple Cross Counter* comp EP. Sound quality is very good. As tempting as it is to swoon over perhaps the best hardcore band in the world, and even though I personally purchased this counterfeit, I am fundamentally against the idea of reviewing bootlegs of studio releases. Bootleggers be damned! Hopefully, this bootleg inspires an official re-release from the band, because the cost to purchase the originals are too high for the people who would appreciate this music the most. (BS)
(bootleg, no addy)

B-BACK – "Second Hand" CD

Always a pleasure to hear a modern '60s-influenced garage band pull off an album's worth of original material that holds up on its own. This Italian outfit is excellent beat rock/garage in the same canon alongside THE THANES, EMBROOKS, and the SATELLITERS. These are the bands that have taken their influence from that perfect era of music history—the mid '60s—and have created their own thing, instead of merely being imitations. In doing this, they don't lose the authentic '60s vibe, and yet they don't sound like anyone else. This is definitely recommended for those of you who dig this type of stuff. (BG)
(Area Pirata, www.areapirata.com)

THE BELLRAYS – "Les Cornichons/You Got the Power"

What the? After hearing about six seconds of the A-side, I was absolutely hooked. It's a cover of some sort. Either they're covering an old '60s lounge pop song or they've turned the song into a '60s lounge pop song. Think BURT BACHARACH. I don't speak French, but I picked up cornichons, mushrooms, chocolate, and mayonnaise. The B-side is an original rocker that sounds like it could be a MOTÖRHEAD cover. Good shit. Really good shit. (KK)
(Turborock, 6 Rue Maurice Dutacq, 14000 Caen, FRANCE)

BESTHÖVEN / SKELETON – split LP

SKELETON fucking destroys it with some gut-wrenching, guttural, D-beat crust for all those who dig the raw crust/punk. I kind of go in phases of when I can and can't listen to lots of total noisy raw punk, but this is pretty rhythmic for the style; it almost reminds me of DOOM in some ways, which isn't bad at all. They even do a CRUDE SS cover to show where they're coming from. BESTHÖVEN lays down yet another set of super raw songs. I have to both admire and disdain the fact that a band can put out so much material; I mean it is really easy on one hand when you stick to a formula but I think it also shows that they really like this style and stick with it. I mean, they make my top ten most of the time and I like them, it's just getting hard for me to decipher which songs are which. Folks who like this stuff will already know about both of these bands. They both play it proper. (WK)
(The Total End, thetotalendrecords@yahoo.com)

BETTY CRACKER – "Easy Bay Coven" CD

This is a six-song EP of guitar pop from a gang of Canucks. They come on like SLANT 6 mixed with SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES: spooky guitar lines and echo-laden vocals from all four members. It's got a definite SoCal vibe too...some of these songs could fit right in on the *Suburbia* soundtrack! Pop and punk, yet not pop punk, know what I mean? My only complaint is that most of the songs are a bit too long for my reduced attention span. (AM)
(Betty Kracker, www.bettykracker.com)

BIG FUCKIN SKULL – "Fuckin Skulls Kill Kill" CDEP

Brief CD (six songs in under twelve minutes) of *Walk Among Us*-era MISFITS worship with a pop punk feel in the music and general lyrical depth. The sparse, pixilated packaging is sub-demo quality—in fact, I would actually say many of the pre-release promo CDs we get in the mail have better artwork and more content—and the production itself is pretty rudimentary, but that's probably missing the point. BIG FUCKIN SKULL has at least mastered the art of writing a catchy song (even if it was stolen from Glenn Danzig), and though undeniably D-U-M-B, they've also got a certain charm. (CS)
(JD Music Productions, www.jdmusicpro.com)

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA – "Diamond Cutter" CD

I have no idea whether I want to laugh or cry. When five Canadian longhairs inspired by a fever dream lay down semi-metallic rock and roll like this, it sends your little world in to a tailspin and molests your sensibilities. What else but rock are you supposed to do with songs like "End of the World Sex Party," "Slave To Your Rock and Roll," and "Piss Proud"? (ST)
(No List, www.nolistrecords.com)

BILLY REESE PETERS – "Almost Heaven" CD

I remember these guys from the split they did with the GRABASS CHARLESTONS a few years back, but I can't actually remember hearing them. The loss is mine, as these guys play great Gainesville punk a lot like the CHARLESTONS with even more of a mixed bag of instruments and wackiness. Scratchy vocals and good melodies make this top shit. (AD)
(No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)

THE BLACK AND WHITES – "You're the Only Girl" EP

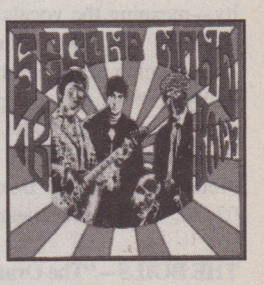
Super catchy garaged-fueled power pop, done with slightly dirty production and singalong appeal hitting the high tens. Three great tracks, with healthy undertones of some of that '60s girl band head-bopping appeal and wide, strutting RAMONES rock 'n' roll. No better way to kick-start the new year, and a band that I can't wait to hear more of. Excellent. (SD)
(Douchemaster, www.douchemasterrecords.com)

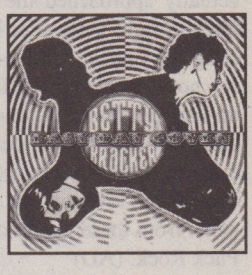
THE BLACK BEAUTIES – "Catch A Beat" CD

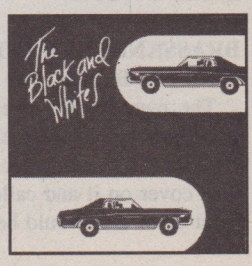
Chicago's BLACK BEAUTIES sound like a mishmash of THE STITCHES, EXPLODING HEARTS, and maybe a little DMZ or REAL KIDS. While I think the songs on this CD are good, it will need a couple more listens to figure out with the hooks will excite me for a while like a good record will or if they will annoy me like a bad television jingle. Right now I would say that this would be a decent pickup but I reserve the right to change my mind. Oh yeah, the singer is Chris Anderson who shot all them pictures for *Horizontal Action*. Of course, what that has to do with actually playing music is beyond me. (JF)
(Full Breach, 2060 N. California Ave, Chicago, IL 60647, www.fullbreach77.com)

BLACK SUNDAY – "Cut It Out" EP

BLACK SUNDAY is another project spearheaded by ALICJA TROUT of LOST SOUNDS/RIVER CITY TANLINES fame. Now supposedly, BLACK SUNDAY was supposed to be a band that featured the music that wouldn't fit into Alicja's other projects. I think based on this release and previous releases, BLACK SUNDAY has a pretty distinctive sound. BLACK SUNDAY seems to be a







little bit more new wave-y than the aforementioned bands, but still captures a great punk pop sensibility underneath. Another solid release from this prolific songwriter. (JF)
(Tic Tac Totally, www.tictactotally.com)

BLIND ASSASSINS – "Six Feet Under" CD

I'm sorry, this shit is a total turd. The best thing about it is the cover. Skeletons in sunglasses! One of whom is flippin the bird. *Punk!!* Like a horrible version of the BRUISERS' rockabilly songs. I like those but this is just bad. *¡Aye carumba!* (JU)
(Cyclone, www.cyclonerecords.com)

BLOOD I BLEED / SOUND LIKE SHIT – split EP

BLOOD I BLEED has some goofy riffs and not-so-tight drumming, but if you can see past that, these guys have some crazy-ass grind riffing and stop-on-a-dime change ups. The vocals are really high but not to loud in the mix, which is a breath of fresh air. SOUND LIKE SHIT is a non-stop distortion machine of Japanese grind; the recording is a little quiet but the tunes make up for it. Seven songs with manic high vox, raging fast guitar licks, and solid blasts. Not a bad split at all. (NE)
(Stone Free, www.stonefreerecords.nl)

BLOOD VESSELS – CD

Boston's BLOOD VESSELS play no frills, mid-tempo hard rock with a punk rock sensibility—meaning the vocals are shouted, not sung, and they keep the guitar solos to a minimum. The opening track is strong but nothing else really grabbed me, except for maybe the funny song titles like "Catholic Zombies" and "Escape from My Brain." (PC)
(Teenage Heart, PO Box 302645, Boston, MA 02130, www.teenageheartrecords.com)

THE BOILS – "The Orange and the Black" CD

Apparently the mighty Philadelphia Flyers actually approached the band to write them a bitchin' fight song after hearing their "Bullies" song last year, so what we have here is six rousing hockey anthems. THE BOILS play mid-to-up-tempo streetpunk, and whereas a lot of this stuff will bore you to death they get a bye ball due to their humor, good songwriting, and unabashed love of the music. Another good game from these gnarly old veterans. File under Puck Rock. (AD)
(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)

BRASSKNUCKLE BOYS / DEADLINE – "Can't Be Beaten" CD

The meat of this release actually came out five years ago. Now, the label has added some even earlier tracks from both bands, slapped a new cover on it and called it a new release. In most cases that would be a con, but this CD is an absolute ripper so I am more than happy to get it a second time. DEADLINE is one of my favorite bands and can do no wrong in my book; their recent releases are superior to these tracks but all six of these tracks are fantastic, most notably their cover of ARGY BARGY's "Another Day in Paradise." Super catchy punk rock with some of the best female vocals in punk (I kid you not), I could listen to this all day. Before hearing them I pegged the BRASSKNUCKLE BOYS for a ropey skin band, but was way off mark—these East Coast thugs kick down some really strong street punk with a rock edge. I highly recommend this release even though the tracks are pretty old, 'cause it's easily as good as anything out right now. Nice. (TB)
(Haunted Town, 1658 N.Milwaukee Ave., #169, Chicago, Il 60647)

BRODY'S MILITIA / NUNSLAUGHTER – split EP

OK, so we've got classic cult death metal band NUNSLAUGHTER doing one original, then a cover of SEPTIC DEATH's "Terrorain" and THE MISFITS' "We Bite" in their usual theatrically unholy and crushing NUNSLAUGHTER way. They do "Terrorain" alright, but "We Bite" is totally superior, and hilarious. The end of the NUNSLAUGHTER side is a locked groove saying "bite" over and over again. BRODY'S MILITIA does pretty rippin' covers of CELTIC FROST's "Morbid Tales" and SARCOFAGO's "Ready to Fuck." I was entertained the whole way through this one, but really only you can decide if a split 7" of punk and metal covers is your jam. (AA)
(Hell's Headbangers, 3593 Medina Rd. #109, Medina, OH 44256)

THE CANNIBALS – "Suburban Sex" EP

I love it when "hardcore dudes" (I'd use air-quotes if I could, but you can't see me) attempt to ditch that tag and attempt something purely punk. It's either gonna be something a hell of a lot worse than you'd ever expect *or* something totally great. Fortunately, this falls in the latter category. Great "tweener-core" here folks, no doubt about it. The whole EP has this toss-off air about it, like they just got wasted and recorded it in their living room or something (for optimum tape-hiss, by the sound of things), which does wonders for my overall view of this single. A safe bet, no matter which side of the fence you sit. (MC)
(Cowabunga, 2190 Coltonville #13, Sycamore, IL 60178)

CEASE UPON THE CAPITOL – CD

Screamy vox with decent lyrics and angular counter melodic guitar and bass arrangements reminiscent, but not overtly, of PORTRAITS OF PAST, YAPHET KOTTO, and RAEIN. They have a good raw and frantic (not frail) edge to their sound and these folks really push the musical envelope with this otherwise stagnant sub-genre. The transitions are extremely well played; the drums give so much force to the breakdowns and mid-tempo mutilated-arpeggio art-damaged parts, that somehow despite not normally liking this sort of sound, I dig it. Nice art, layout, and packaging. (BS)
(Sonic Deadline, sonicdeadline.cjb.net)

THE CHUMPS – "Invent Rock'n'Roll ('95-'00)" CD

This is a posthumous release of five years worth of Austin's sleaze punk band THE CHUMPS playing trashed out rock 'n' roll with a sense of humor. Totally enjoyable, especially the singer's semi-annoying bizarro vocals. He kind of strays into some JELLO BIAFRA meets JOEY VINDICTIVE territory on some of the earlier recordings. Pretty good. (AA)
(Mortville, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765)

COBRA NOIR – "Barricades" CD

Dark, heavy D-beat crust from Canada. I've always liked the use of octaves on guitar in hardcore. They have been used heavily by emo bands from FUGAZI to FUNERAL DINER. The first thing I noticed when listening to COBRA NOIR was the plentiful use of octaves on guitar and honestly the first time I listened I heard heavy, dark emo and completely missed the crust, yeah yeah I wasn't listening that close that time through. This band does play dark D-beat crust with lots of melody on guitar. The production is muddy but it sort of helps it to sound heavy. It is the combination of heavy crust and melody in the guitar that kept my interest. This is the second full-length from these Canadians. (MH)
(Chainsaw Safety, PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426)

CODE 4-15 – "Raise Your Glass" CD

Hurray! More Celtic-flavored punk, my favorite! This time it's from the dirty mean streets of Santa Barbara. This is a little faster than your average Celtic-flavored punk band, sounding more melodic hardcore/pop-punk than streetpunk, more akin to BAD RELIGON than, say, DROPKICK MURPHIES. They're not using the Irish influence so much as a crutch, but more as a novelty to add a little spice to the mix. I hear THE MOPES here too. Not bad at all! (AD)
(Pirish, PO Box 3778, Santa Barbara, CA 93130)

CRASHED OUT / TEMPLARS – split EP

Skinheads rule, OK! THE TEMPLARS—past, present, and future leading lights of the American skinhead scene—have a record available for you! On their side of this melodic skinhead split 45, THE TEMPLARS sing about how critics "say we're going nowhere fast, they say our lifestyle couldn't last." This song, entitled

"Nowhere Fast," was recorded in 2002. THE TEMPLARS started out in 1993 and have thoroughly demonstrated their importance as artists, their vast influence on other skinhead bands, and their longevity. Let us celebrate fourteen years of THE TEMPLARS' reign as skinhead royalty! Long live THE TEMPLARS! The flipside of this Templecombe single serves up "Outcast," a ska-influenced anthem written and recorded by English veteran skinheads CRASHED OUT in 2003. These wily old skins will have you beer drinkers dancing around the bar like men possessed. CRASHED OUT knows how to entertain their fans down at the local watering hole! For maximum enjoyment order this single today!!! (BR)
(Templecombe, PO Box 602, Bayshore, NY 11706-0660, www.templars.com)

CRASS — "Demos 1977-79" LP

If you are already a fan of CRASS and their dada punk politics then this is just another flavor of what they do—a rawer, grittier flavor. If you aren't already a fan, this isn't really a good place to start. The sound quality is a lot like my most beloved mixtape that I left in the summer sun one too many times. It's a little hard to listen to, with the tape hiss being louder than the vocals at times, but it has some charm hidden in the grit that I'm sure you can't hear anywhere else. The songs that shine in this collection are "Tired," "Fight War Not Wars/They've Got A Bomb," and "Heart Throb of the Mortuary." I'll buy this because I'm a fan, but nothing floored me on here. Cool, but not essential. Oh, and FYI, there are no less than fifteen CRASS symbols on the sleeve of this record. (AA)
(no address)

CRAWLSPACE – "The Spirit Of '76" CD

This is the sound of a bunch of stoners jamming out in their garage. They turn in a few originals and a passel of freak-damaged covers of PATTI SMITH, DEEP PURPLE, THE SAINTS, THE ROLLING STONES, and more obscure stuff. They tear the songs apart but I'm sure they mean it as a sort of good-natured tribute. This is probably a pretty accurate depiction of the sounds emanating from grass-fogged suburban carports and basements in 1976. Hippy-rockers will love this. Punks might want to pass. (AM)
(Gulcher, www.gulcher.gemm.com)

THE DANGERMEN – "The Dark Place" CD

There was a great time in the mid '90s when a flood of cool garage punk bands helped revitalize the scene, especially for us older farts who were feeling a bit out of place at the "punk" shows full of backwards baseball cap-wearing douchebags. I'm talkin' about the trouble-making, drunken antics of the NEW BOMB TURKS, HUMPERS, THE FELLS, etc; and all of those bands took their influences from both '77-style and old high-energy rock 'n' roll punk like THE SAINTS, STOOGES, and THE WEIRDOS. Well, these Aussie insurgents carry on that fine tradition, and this CD is their testament. I bet they're great live. (BG)
(Mere Noise, www.merenoise.net)

DEADFALL – "Mass Destruction" CD

If the health of the US hardcore scene was to be judged in a court of law, this disc would be evidence I would need to prove that it is more than alive and well. One of the most hardworking, prolific, fun, and downright ripping bands of the past decade (especially here in the cynical Bay Area), this CD compiles three 7"s and a bundle of comp tracks of the band's fierce uncompromising hardcore. It's hard to pinpoint the sound; one part JERRYS KIDS, one part NEGATIVE APPROACH on speed, and one part full-on thrash. The packaging is a treat, with lyrics, flyers, and photos of the bands' ugly mugs. While this disc is absolutely essential, it does not capture what really make this band special; the live show and the fact that these four dudes just love what they are doing. This band sets the place on fire, and for that, dear readers, you will have to get off your arses and check them out on tour. In the meantime, go get this. (TB)
(Six Weeks, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

DEMOLITION – "Mob of Wolves" LP

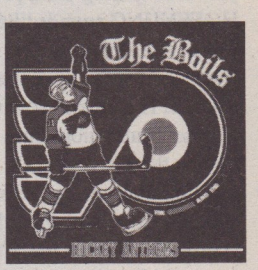
OK, GISM meets streetpunk MOTÖRHEAD. Your mind blown? Mine is. Galloping D-beat, with classically MOTÖRHEAD guitar sound/riffage, shouting gang vocals, lead vocals very much in the vein of GISM's Sakevi Yokoyama, and English-through-a-meatgrinder lyrics. It's immediately likeable, but it's maybe a little too epic and polished for me. I want some of the fucking off the wall weirdness of GISM in here too. I guess I can't have it all. (AA)
(Black Water, PO Box 5223, Portland, OR 97208)

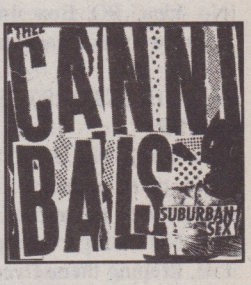
DEMONS – "(Her Name Was) Tragedy" CDEP

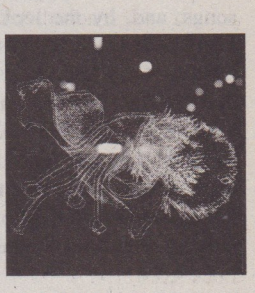
The DEMONS have been doing the dirty MC5/STOOGES thing for a while now (three albums worth). Given that they're Swedish, it should come as no surprise that they do it rather well. Just how good they really are is highlighted by the two covers they masterfully execute—"Situations" by SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS, and the evergreen "Police On My Back." Their two originals bode rather well for the forthcoming full-length. (RK)
(Rock Against Music, www.rockagainstmusic.com)

DEPRESSION / HAEMORRHAGE – split LP

Bet money that I was fucking stoked when I saw I got this to review, fucking HAEMORRHAGE!!! Spain's reigning kings (and queen) of gore-soaked grind playing twelve live rippers from there tenth anniversary show—nine original songs and three covers: CARCASS (duh), REGURGITATE, and IMPETIGO. Aside from the lo-fi recording quality everything shines through on this side of the split. If you love grind and have yet to hear HAEMORRHAGE you need to get right! Total CARCASS worship played solid and on point. No joke! DEPRESSION has stepped it up in the grind game, let me tell you. I was not impressed with the last split I heard on Power It Up, but shit man, this just kills! All the music tracks are done by one dude, and it all fucking crushes. Never-ending, dark, blistering grind with tons of guttural vox and strained screechy highs. This spilt is a fucking keeper for sure. I wish motherfuckers would wise up and start sending doubles. (NE)
(Power It Up, Zum Holzeelde 12, 31226 Piene, GERMANY www.power-it-up.de)







RECORDS

DESTRUCTORS 666 / RADICUS – split CD

First up, RADICUS—three tunes of rocked-out horror punk, bit like a more super-charged TSOL. A bit too polished and radio-friendly for my ears, but I could see a lot of the more Hot Topic inclined punks digging this. Next to the starting line, DESTRUCTORS 666: three tunes, more rough and ready and less inclined to bully its way onto any mainstream alternative radio station. Could have done without the "Kick Out the Jams" cover, a no-no in my book. Sounds like PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES on steroids. (SD)
(no address)

DIE HOFFNUNG – "Love Songs" CD

This band of brothers from Florida plays intricate, cathartic post-hardcore. I don't have much to say about it beyond that, but more words are required. If you imagine a bass-less SHELLAC, but faster, with screamed vocals, you'd be getting an approximation of what DIE HOFFNUNG sounds like. It strikes me as something of a departure for No Idea, but they are from Gainesville and one of them was in GUNMOLL. The music is heavy and physical, but for all the brutal pounding and math-rock guitar hooks, there's very little groove. Maybe it's the lack of four-string action. I'm picturing two skinny dudes with beards and no shirts, sweat splashing all over the place as they rock out. I have no idea (!) if that's what they look like. It's just what I imagine. (AM)
(No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604, www.noidearecords.com)

THE DIRECTORS / THE LAST KILLERS – split EP

First up, THE LAST KILLERS—two tracks from these Spanish retro-rockers, diving straight into the garage vaults of the swirling '60s. Not falling too deep into that big bad retro hole, keeping themselves head high by playing it fast, loud, and super-driven; nice tunes, nice songs, and, by the look of things, nice boys. The FUZZTONES on speed—that'll do. The DIRECTORS keep it strictly '77, which works me just fine. No frills no spills, like the VIOLATORS if the VIOLATORS were signed to Rip Off Records. The tunes solid, the hooks, well, hooky, and the attitude rampant on all three songs—another Spanish winner. (SD)
(Area Pirata, www.areapirata.com)

THE DIRTY BURDS – CD

I could have sworn that there was another DIRTY BURDS from Canada a few years back. Anyway, this DIRTY BURDS is an all female Los Angeles-sounding bar punk band from the UK. This CD is really bad and I wouldn't even give it away. (JF)
(Tinnitus, tinnitus@yahoo.com)

DISKELMÄ – "Run for Your Life" EP

Here is some raging manic thrash punk with really ragged shouted vocals that remind me of the male vocalist of REACT but a lot faster. They mix in the Finnish punk beat with a healthy dose of chugga chugga guitar gallops and loads of raw energy. This is good for what it is and what it is is punk rock pure and simple. (WK)
(Kämäset Levyt, www.punkfinland.net/kamanen)

THEE DOUBLE D'S – "Dillybar/Groce Out!"

I walked into the MRR house with my daughter this morning and, as we walked through the door, she pointed out the THEE DOUBLE D'S Christmas card to MRR, right there on the corkboard. (How the fuck does she know who THEE DOUBLE D'S are?) I proceeded to the top secret "Review Room" and saw that I had been assigned this 7" record to review. I know what you're thinking: "Twilight Zone." Me too. Well let me tell you, if you're into melodic punk rock with female vocals (that are Kim Shattuck-like, at times) that is catchy as fuck, then you're in for a real treat. Well recorded, this record is mid-tempo, straightforward, and a little cheesy, but very, very solid. Oh, and if you didn't get your very own copy of that Christmas card, you really missed out. (KK)
(Double D's, myspace.com/theedoubleds)

DOWN AND OUTS – "Minneapolis" EP

Sweet and sour "melodic catchy punk." Three tracks, not a lot of information with this one…they're either from Minnesota or England…or somewhere else. They go along with the MPLS/Gainesville template then out of nowhere—football terrace chanted choruses! I like it, mix it up all you like kids. This is very good, I think I've been waiting a long time for something like this. (AD)
(Rat Patrol)

DRILLER KILLER / SIMBIOSE – split CD

You know 'em, you love 'em (I hope!) and if you don't well then you are a lame fool. The almighty DRILLER KILLER is back with two songs of raging D-beat chaos done right and direct. This band is a classic with, at this point, tons of releases under their collective belts. I bet if you went to your local record store or punk distro you would find more then one DRILLER KILLER LP or split, so go get 'em and get to slammin'! SIMBIOSE plays a darker tone of D-beat, more metal tinged, but not at all skimping on the brutality. This is a great split all around. (NE)
(MCR Company, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN)

EAR & DARK – "There's No Such Thing as Dragons" 10"

Starts out with a guitar heavy indie-rock sound that reminds me of SHELLAC, and the music is really manic and interesting in parts, but the vocals kill it for me. Nonsense phrases repeated ad nauseum that occasionally degenerate into screams is sometimes really cool if you have the right person with the right charismatic voice. If not, you've just got a really, really annoying record. I feel bad calling something second-rate derivative no wave, but there it is. (AA)
(Black Light, Fredensgade 31, 8000 Aarhus C, DENMARK)

EAT THE LIVING – "Bloodbath" CD

Notice the band name, now the album title, and add that to the fact that they have zombie artwork all over the CD, what do you think this sounds like? Nope, not creepy zombie metal, it's got a somewhat unique sound. Scratchy, high-pitched, and impossible to understand monotone female vocals over some generic, fast metalcore. This left me somewhat confused. Her vocals worked most of the time and at times even sound, well…sick, but the music was generic melodic death metal/metalcore. Their lyrics do cover death, getting eaten by monsters, and a few other dark topics but it doesn't really come across in the music. (MH)
(Eat the Living, www.eattheliving.com)

ENDWARFMENT / VICTIMISED – split EP

I opened this EP up and saw that ENDWARFMENT does a BACKSTREET BOYS cover, what a bummer, but instead of some bullshit fastcore crap or goofball grind I'm shocked to hear the sweet sounds of well played gore-fucking-grind. Fuckin' A, this is a ripper—two original songs with sick blast beats and a wall of thick distorted guitars. The vocals make it top notch though, slurred highs and guttural, layered lows—all around non-stop brutality. I'm not going to touch on the BSB cover because you already know it sucks. VICTIMISED has a muddy recording and sounds a like a second rate INTEGRITY rip off with deep, crusty vocals. ENDWARFMENT won me over on this split. Oh well, one out of two. (NE)
(Plata, www.platarecords.no)

ERANTZUN / IAG – split LP

The first side of this LP starts with Basque Hardcore/Punk ERANTZUN who is in the style of LOS CRUDOS without trying to actually be CRUDOS. The vocals are fucking awesomely brutal with strong political content, and the riffs are relentless. Seriously, this side of the record rips start to finish. Being all hopped up from side A, Side B is no let down. IAG ("Insulto Al Gobierno") keeps it going with more raging hardcore with lyrics that speak to the simultaneous rage and helplessness that all of us feel looking at what is happening in the world right now. Awesome. (AA)

(Reek of Putrefaction, PO Box 245, 48960 Galdacano, [Vizcaya] SPAIN, www.reekofputrefaction.galeon.com)

ESKORBUTO – "Mucha Policia, Poca Diversión" EP

ESKORBUTO was a seminal Spanish punk outfit that would become legendary as well as incendiary in their time, and put out some of the most classic and beloved punk records ever before founding members Josu and Juanma's deaths. This EP title translates to "Too Many Police, Too Little Fun" in English, which epitomizes the brutal social aspect of the bands lyrics as well as their punk attitude and ideals. Anyone associated with punk that you meet in Spain will know this band and the songs contained on this record. ESKORBUTO was to Spain what THE CLASH was to England. They wrote the anthems of a subculture and anyone interested in the true international history of punk should try to pick up this reissue along with the LA UVI, VULPESS, and OX POW EPs from Munster. Dare I say this is one of the best EPs of all-time? Fuck yes! (WK)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

FADER WAR – "Norway Hardcore 1982" EP

Poorly played, sloppy, and unessential low-impact Norwegian hardcore from the '80s that pales in the shadow of *good* Norwegian bands like BANNYLYST, SVART FRAMTID, SO MUCH HATE, BARN AV REGNBUEN or even current great Norwegian bands like 2:20, DRUNK, and whatever is out on Heartfirst Records this year. Charming in it's lo-fi, over-laden with feedback, sloppy messiness with slathering vocals, but so are the twelve-year olds down the street in a garage trying to learn MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE covers. This does have the guitar driven melody and hoarse vocals that are cornerstones of the Norwegian style, but the fifth and final track is an unlistenable, lift-the-needle CHAOS UK "Barnyard Boogie" style piss take. Collector legend or not, if you were to currently see a band that sounded this un-together and atrocious, you'd be walking down the street from the club by the third song to grab a beer. No, it's not extreme distortion like CONFUSE or even PSYCHO SIN, it's just a mess. While these kind of early proto-steps are important to the evolution of music, everything farted into a microphone in the '80s honestly doesn't need to be re-issued or booted. White label, scratched out matrix, slapped together packaging, limited to 500, why bother? (KS)
(Bootleg, no address)

THE FELT UPS – "Feel Me Up" 12"

First things first: This has to be one of the best band names in quite some time. Okay, now that we've established that... I'm listening to the record and I can't decide whether or not I like it. I suppose, ultimately, I'm lukewarm. It's catchy, that's true. But the female vocals are just a little too squeaky for me. And it does get a little boring to hear song after song about how tired she/they are of having guys looking at her/them or trying to touch her/them or picking up on her/them. We get it already... (KK)
(Hate, Via S. Giovanni in Laterano, 192/194 00184 Roma, ITALY)

FIRED UP – "When the Lights Go Out" EP

Six tracks of by-the-books youth crew hardcore. I'm sure that's exactly what they were going for, but I gotta say, it's 2007 and I mean, I guess this style is pretty timeless actually, but there has been so much of it that at this point it's gotta be absolutely stellar to stand out to me. Maybe I'm just getting old. After a few listens, I do have to admit that I could probably throw it on a few more times somewhere down the road. Also I'm really digging the last track "When the Lights Go Out." It reminds me of "The Storm" by JUDGE. Love that jammy! (JU)
(Youngblood, www.youngblood-records.com)

THE FOCUS – "Between the White and the Red" EP

Dark, moody Australian post-punk with a heavy anarcho political bent and a definite ear for melody. In other words, they haven't sacrificed tunes in the name of art. I'd liken them to THE MOB or ZOUNDS but with the addition of US melodic punk tunefulness. One of their songs filches its lyrics from a poem in Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia,* which is one of the best books about war I've ever read. This EP is great and I look forward to hearing more stuff, including the split CD with Philadelphia's AMATEUR PARTY that I believe is on the way. (AM)
(PO Box 239, Nth Carlton, 3054 Victoria, AUSTRALIA, thefocus.1937@gmail.com)

FORCED MARCH – "Wasted Existence" EP

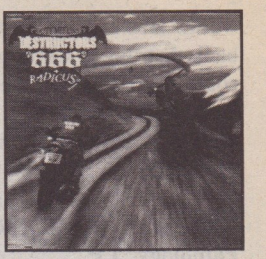
FORCED MARCH reminds me of a thrashier version of THE PIST. They play bare bones music with very politically motivated lyrics that are easily understood and don't hide behind metaphor. I like that they are really accessible, though that also that leaves a little to be desired for someone (like me) who has been listening to punk records for the past fifteen years. I wasn't too impressed with the layout overall, although I do like the war-monkey on the cover. Brilliant! I think that the record could have had a little more style on the insert to kind of show you what they are about. Overall, this is good stuff, especially on the song "Wasted Existence"—I think the female vocals really add another layer to the overall sound. I would like to see this band live as well as see how they evolve over time. (WK)
(Forced March, 2619 NE 6th Pl, Portland, OR 97212)

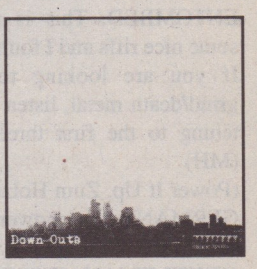
THE FRONT – "Sounds of the New Frontier" CD

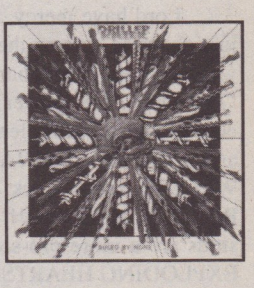
Two chaps. Two women. Some Wyoming pride, and a sense of history, desperation, cheap drugs (preferably of the up variety), and some sonic, snotty punk 'n' roll. Almost like a collection of AVENGERS cast-offs, recorded while they were fucked up and energized. Before the polish and production. Decent, driving punk, which makes sense, I guess. (RK)
(The Front, www.the-frontmusic.com)

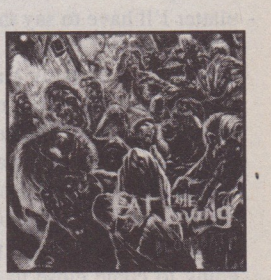
THE FUTURE VIRGINS – "Gravity" EP

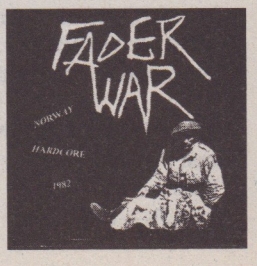
THE FUTURE VIRGINS were one of the bands at last years Fest that I'd never heard before that blew me away. Yeah, I was hammered but they were still really good. Unfortunately I didn't get one of these 7's from them. Months later here it is though and as good as I remember them being. Well-played and yet sloppy, energetic, degenerate pop punk with echoes of garage rock and a hint of HICKEY. I have still never heard SEXY or the JACK PALANCE BAND but apparently there's people from those bands in this band. Take that for whatever it may be











worth. However, you can take to the fucking bank that this is worth getting and that if they come to your town these guys are worth seeing and drinking with. (ST)
(Plan-It-X South, 720 Pickens Ave, Pensacola, FL 32503)

GENERAL SURGERY – "Left Hand Pathology" LP

Old school death metal from Sweden. I say old school but this band originally formed in 1989, put out a few demos and an EP, and then vanished, so this isn't some retro fascination. I didn't know they reformed in 2003. They've been through more drummers than SPINAL TAP and now have Adde, ex-SAYYADINA/ex-BIRDFLESH behind the kit. This reminds me a lot of early CARCASS, so much so it's hard to imagine this isn't a lost CARCASS recording from right after *Necrotocism*, of course with better production. They get points for the album title, which is a nice nod to ENTOMBED. This is nothing new, but has some nice riffs and I found myself headbanging. If you are looking to discover old gore-grind/death metal, listen to this album after listening to the first three CARCASS releases. (MH)
(Power It Up, Zum Holzeelde 12, 31226 Piene, GERMANY www.power-it-up.de)

GENTLEMAN JESSE & HIS MEN – "I Don't Wanna Know" EP

.....Lord have mercy, these young dudes are just about as cute as the MODERN LOVERS were on their first album....and they play late '70s early '80s power pop!!!!!!! They also cum complete with clear jingle jangle guitars and poor-man's JOE JACKSON meets PAUL WELLER vocal work done on top of nice BEATLES harmonies!!!!!!! More or less these studs are a more pro-sounding version of the EXPLODING HEARTS and I'm giving this as a compliment!!!!!!! Of the three cuts on this platter I'll have to say that the A side, "I Don't Wanna Know (Where You Been Tonight)" stands out as a finely crafted pop ditty worthy of anything that came out on Stiff or Bomp! back in the day!!!!! There's a big power pop nostalgia trip going on amongst young people right now and out of it has come a few groovy singles and LPs.....unfortunately I don't think this new wave of power poppers is ever going to come close to getting the amount of pussy that Eric Carmen was getting when he was a beloved RASPBERRY....the man's fingers permanently stink of caviar.....!! !!!!!!!!!!!!! (SW)
(Douchemaster, douchemasterrecords.com)

GEWOHNHEITSTRINKER – "Zwei Auf Einen Streich!" 2xCD

This would appear to be a deluxe reissue of two LPs—*1984* and *Schone Musik Fur Hassliche Menschen*—in a double CD with gatefold digipak. Lyrics, photos, probably other stuff, except it's all in German. They're definitely skinheads. Definitely anti-Nazi. Would appear to like beer, and have friends of both genders willing to be photographed with them. Musically, they're a bit of a treat, actually. Melodic twin-guitar attack, with punchy vocals that don't roar too much (while maintaining that throaty edge). Definitely leaning towards the PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES/STRIKE end of Oi!...and all the better for it. (RK)
(Scumfuck Tradition, www.scumfuck.de)

GRIDE / LYCANTHROPHY – split EP

Two of the few Czech bands I know on one split and both don't easily fall into a genre. Grindcore? Fastcore? Speedy hardcore? First up, GRIDE, who has gone through some member changes since the discography CD *1996-2003* came out. GRIDE has always played fast and sometimes in a heavy grindcore way but mostly fastcore. I like the bursts of speed and all the changes in each short track. LYCANTHROPHY thrashed me a new one. Very fast hardcore with female/male tradeoff vocals, the female vocals capable of taking paint off the walls. The songs are short and fast without sounding metal and her vocals sound like they hurt to sing. I like the big insert with lyrics in Czech and English. (MH)
(Insane Society, PO Box 18, 504 01 Novy Bydzov, CZECH REPUBLIC)

GUILT LUST – LP

Killer! This five-piece from Western Massachusetts brings us eight songs of melody-filled hook-laden hardcore. The little guitar leads are really cool and make this band stand out from all the cut-n-paste NEGATIVE APPROACH-riff, rehash schlock that's saturating these pages these days. One of the tracks is a LOVE cover (yes, you heard me correctly, I said LOVE!!!!). Not unlike FUCKED UP for lack of a better comparison. Well written lyrics, well played, well recorded, and well thought-out songs. Refreshing. Plus it's good to see that DJ's vocal chords aren't going to waste. I loved his previous band LAST IN LINE. This is a great fucking record. Check it out duder! (JU)
(Fun With Smack, 29 Westgate Rd, Apt 2, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467)

THE GUNS – "Attack" CD

This looks very old and British, though it's not—it's Cleveland, circa now. I thought it would sound like BROKEN BONES and I wasn't *that* far off, though this is faster and heavier, as one would expect. This is speedy punk with a metal flavor, reminiscent of late-'80s crossover—think CORROSION OF CONFORMITY, though it's better than most of the bands who were actually around back then. After reading the liner notes, it seems that these songs were actually written back between 1984 and 1986 (which would put them well ahead of their game) and recorded in 2005 as a reunion, minus the original drummer who passed away. I must say—if you like your crossover then you will totally dig this. 18 tracks. (AD)
(The Guns, PO Box 609250, Cleveland, OH 4109)

GURKHA / MALIGNANT TURMOR – split CD

Is it safe to say that MALIGNANT TUMOR is the new Jr. GENOCIDE SS? I think so. It's not a bad thing in the least, but honestly I never really think to myself "I'm hankerin' for something that sounds just like GENOCIDE SS, but isn't." With thirteen MT songs, this split makes me wonder why the stuff didn't come out individually, but I guess record labels are on a tight budget these days with MP3s taking over. In any case MALIGNANT TUMOR brings the rock and if need more rock in yer life this is the band for you. GURKHA also brings the rock but in a more crusty way, and they speed the shit up man, its great. Lots of D-beat, lots of crunching guitars and bass, growled, guttural vocals, and tight drumming. I would like to have heard more GURKHA songs on this split but MT took up most of the room.(NE)
(Insane Society, PO Box 18, 504 01 Novy Bydzov, CZECH REPUBLIC)

THE HAD IT UP TO HERES – "Are Bringing the Hammer Down" CD

This power trio from Detroit is straight off the blocks with a wall of rock 'n' roll guitars, played fast but not frantic, never forgetting that all-too-important hooks-and-choruses formula that makes a tune a tune. Never relenting, always powering forward with the odd AC/DC riff and STOOGES hook thrown into the already boiling mix. A stripped down ANNIHILATION TIME or a punked up KISS with the odd youth crew moment. Great. (SD)
(Hell City, www.hellcitydetriot.com)

HASTA LA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB – "Inhale The Evil" CD

Finnish punk/rock. Fairly boring rock infused punk with gruff vocals sung in English that overall is decent but for the most part unwavering in it's delivery. It's got a few unexpected moments in songs like "Unchosen" where they really push the melody and add an organ; I wish they'd expand on that. (ST)
(Drop Out Family, www.dropoutfamily.com)

LES HATEPINKS – "Tete Malade: Sick in the Head" CD

French punks that look like they just walked off the boardwalk in Huntington Beach. This band looks just like they sound: like a cross between the STITCHES and PLASTIC

BERTRAND. This is great snotty punk with an almost post-punk feel to it—it goes from melodic to herky-jerky and back again. Fun fun fun. (AD)
(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)

THE HICKOIDS – "Corn Demon" CD

A CD reissue pairing the HICKOIDS' debut album *We're In It for the Corn* with its follow-up EP *Hard Corn*. Both records are '80s hillbilly punk classics, from when the bands weren't afraid to poke fun at themselves, their families and friends, and where they come from. These are the types of records that inspire Swiss bands to want to be hillbillies yet; the fun aspect inevitably gets lost in the translation. The HICKOIDS grew up in Texas so they have the lifestyle ingrained into them and they aren't afraid to use it. The silliness and sheer brilliance that ensues is oh-so-much fun. Lots of great originals like "Animal Husbandry," "U Kin Lead a Hoss To Water, But He Still Drinks on His Own," and "Driftwood 40-23," and irreverent covers of "Burnin' Love," "Hee Haw(theme song)," and "Corn Foo Fighting." Here's hoping the *Waltz-A-Cross-Dress-Texas* LP and the single with my sister's and my favorite Christmas song of all time "We Got the Eggnog If You Got the Whiskey" are next on the release schedule. In the meantime pick this up. It'll do you good. (CK)
(Saustex Media, PO Box 691356, San Antonio, TX 78269-1356, www.saustexmedia.com)

THE HOLY CURSE / JOHNNY CASINO'S EASY ACTION – split EP

THE HOLY CURSE passes the course based on the two following facts. 1. They found a kickass MC5 song ("Future/Now") that hasn't been done to fucking death and 2. They got DENIZ-fucking-TEK to play on it and their own song that precedes it. I don't know if I'm exactly itching for a full length from these gents but I am intrigued. JOHNNY CASINO'S EASY ACTION is adequate big rock fairly similar to THE HOLY CURSE in their obvious love for bands like RADIO BIRDMAN, THE STOOGES, THE MC5 and would fit well on a bill with THE HELLACOPTERS or some such band. Awesome awesome awesome cover above everything else. (ST)
(Turborock, www.turborock.com)

HUMAN ERROR – "Life Sentence" CD

Grind heads from BUDAPEST? Hell yeah! I'll admit that not all the songs on this CD are killer but the ones that stand out shred shred *shred*! Super fast riffing and tight blast beats are the hook, but they rely a lot on snotty thrash riffs. I'm not knocking this, but I do get really tired of the same formula, and with seventeen songs my ears grow weary and tired. Overall, this is not bad. (NE)
(Endless Brutality of Men, www.ebmrecords.com)

HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH / I ACCUSE – split LP

Wait a minute, is there really a band called HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH? Sometimes I think that bands try to out-dumb each other with who can come up with the most ridiculous band name. Regardless, this three piece from Boise, Idaho kicks down some hammering, blown-out thrash. The recording isn't the best with the guitar overwhelming everything else, but the pure speed and intensity still shines through. On the flip side I ACCUSE hits me with some hyper fast drumming and blistering riffage on this all out speedcore assault that if you didn't know any better you would swear was a new hot shit Japanese thrash band. Sounds Pollution nails it again with another totally ripping release. (RC)
(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017, www.sound-pollution.com)

IRON AGE – "Constant Struggle" LP

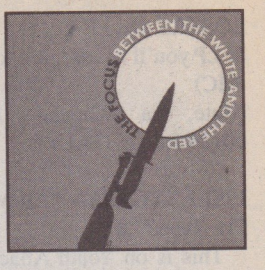
I know this full-length has been out for awhile, but this Reflections Records version (complete with gatefold) is the first time *MRR* has received it for review. Originally released on Youngblood Records, *Constant Struggle* is really not bringing anything new in the grand scheme of the NYHC genre. However, their combination of influences, and more specifically a particular era of those influences, proves that IRON AGE is bringing something refreshing to today's hardcore scene. Anyone can regurgitate and borrow from the CRO-MAGS' *Age of Quarrel*, but IRON AGE is the first American band I've heard that successfully pays homage to the much less-favored *Best Wishes* and actually pulls it off. When I am not hearing NYHC crossover, I am definitely hearing *Master of Puppets*-era METALLICA. Some would complain about the thin guitar production, but it definitely lends to the authenticity of the sound. My only minor complaint is that everything stays at a very mid-paced tempo, which sometimes sucks the energy out of an otherwise well-written song. If you are fan of Germany's TRUE BLUE, or any number of sophomore releases by NYHC bands like LEEWAY or CRO-MAGS, then check this Texas band out. (CC)
(Reflections, www.reflectionsrecords.com)

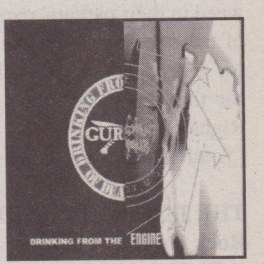
INSOLENTES / TRAS DE NADA – split EP

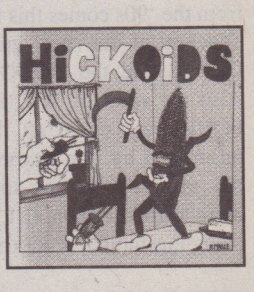
A split between Chicago's long-running (but un-prolific) TRAS DE NADA and Mexico's INSOLENTES on the ever-excellent Southkore label. I'll start with INSOLENTES, who plays heavy, dark crustcore that throws a bunch of different stuff in—FROM ASHES RISE moodiness, occasional blast beats, some galloping hardcore parts, and spiteful, angry vocals. The melodic stuff could have benefited from a heavier recording, but overall their stuff is pretty cool, if a bit all over the place. On the flipside, TRAS DE NADA plays more straightforward, pissed off political hardcore with dual (Spanish language) lyrics, the likes of which has been coming out of Chicago's Southside for the past fifteen years. This band is totally raging! I can't wait to hear more stuff by them. A worthy split. (GN)
(Southkore, 2814 S. Spaulding Ave, Chicago, IL 60623)

INTELLECTUALS – "Invisible Is the Best" LP

Second LP from these Italian garage punks, if memory serves. Although the INTELLECTUALS have never knocked one outta the park, they remain one of a handful of unashamed garage punk bands that can competently pull off the early '90s blueprint (lo-fi, barebones, occasional organ/key action) without it being a complete snooze. Having reached its saturation point as a genre, this '90s garage thing needs to be unbelievably trashy and/or energetic to even stand a chance at sticking out. *Invisible Is the Best* has plenty of close calls, but never quite gets there. A decent LP, especially if your only current joys are REAL







LOSERS and FE FI FO FUMS, but not the sort of LP you'll be reaching for time and time again. (MC)
(Hate, Via S.Giovanni In Laterano 192/194 00184 Rome, ITALY)

ISSEI SAGAVA – "All My Best Lovers Were Pre-Teens" EP

This is on Youth Attack! Records so it was probably assembled by automatons at the Urban Outfitters factory for youth drone post idealism boredom. It attempts to be provocative but is just generic and tame. I imagine a collection of 19-year old skaters from some suburb who love LOCUST and CHARLES BRONSON (or whoever those kids are listening to now) and wear the applicable clothes and think the applicable post-ironic car park thoughts. I am way too old to review this; I was 13 when I got the HERO-IN record, which I think is in the first wave of this kind of idea of punk, and there have probably been like five revivals of that sound, and here is this. A band named after a Japanese cannibal, hooray! They have a song called "All My Best Lovers Were Pre-Teens"—totally outrageous! OMG! Somebody from this band should date Ashley Simpson for sure! One side of the 7" has screeching roll on the floor emo-violence and the other has an unlistenable poem. Unlistenable in that I refuse to listen to spoken word or poetry on principle. Anyway, I think this is probably big in the world of middle class high school kids who snowboard and smoke weed in their parents' rec room. There's a pin up of three teenage boys pissing on each other, so for everyone who gets off on that idea send off for this record fer sure! It's $7.99. For a 7". Righteous. (LG)
(Youth Attack, www.ihateyouthattack.com)

THE JENNIFER ECHO – "Be Dangerous on Rock Guitar" CD

Fuckin' A!!! From the remains of the lesser known yet still great pop punk band BEN GRIM from the '90s comes this killer power pop band. Touches of the pop greatness of DESCENDENTS and the DOUGHBOYS still remain. Also the spirit of Wiz (RIP) of MEGA CITY FOUR lives on in all these bands that were influenced by him in the melodic hey days of the '90s. A great four-song EP with hopefully more to follow soon. (RL)
(Jumping Jupiter, www.thejenniferecho.com)

JEWDRIVER – "Hanukkah Hangover" EP

Part parody, slightly silly, but mostly just fantastic punk, JEWDRIVER puts out a new EP with four songs of loud Greg Ginn-like dissonance and gruff vocal shouts reminiscent of BAD POSTURE. A lyric sheet would make this release a lot better, especially if it had some photos of these guys playing live—they're getting a reputation for crazy shows where bagels get thrown and mayhem ensues. Even without the sarcastic shtick, this record would still stand on its own as the tunes are pretty damn good, but I'm curious how far something like this can go. (BG)
(myspace.com/jewdriver)

KOHU-63 / RED WITH ANGER – split LP

One of my favorite Finnish bands mixes it up with Germany's RED WITH ANGER. On the A-side, KOHU-63 is easily up to the levels of best '80s material, assisted by an added level of power and flexibility in their HC guitars, and a sting reminiscent of TERVEET KADET's debut. On the flip, RED WITH ANGER almost has to be a letdown in comparison, but they keep up the quality (or at least the energy) with their screamed, stop-on-dime HC, arranged with enough interest to be worth a listen before you listen to KOHU-63 all over again. There's also some cross-covering of each other's material, turning this into a surprisingly coherent release. Overall, a very strong piece of work. (SS)
(Stay Free Underground, www.sfu-records.com)

THE LAST MILE – "More Plastic Illusions" LP

Fast, political hardcore from the Netherlands with a heavy '90s bent—there's a marked HIS HERO IS GONE styled "fast to plod to fast" approach and unpredictable song structure with the same curt, melodic guitar squeals (albeit bereft of the overt metallic elements and oppressive low end). The vocals are somewhere in between ECONOCHRIST and RORSCHACH, there's an occasional total emo breakdown, and the speed of the music is delivered with the bursting at the seams spastic-ness of the great '90s Gravity hardcore bands like HEROIN or JOHN HENRY WEST. The lyrics about consumerism, ecology, and radical change are backed with a great booklet with detailed explanations. The packaging is the only draw back, from the CREATION IS CRUCIFIXTION school of Photoshop "design." A minor point of aesthetics on an otherwise great and impressive LP. (KS)
(213, c/o Christelle & Julien, 24 Rue De Verdun, 54560 Audun-Le-Roman, FRANCE, www.213records.fr.st)

LIKSKJIT – "Dodsdisippel" EP

Crusty hardcore from Norway. It's wasn't a good sign when I threw this on and I couldn't have distinguished it from at least 200 other bands. This is mid-paced, lo-fi, sloppy, and reminded me a bit of DÖDSDÖMD and literally countless other crusty Swedish bands. Lyrics aren't included, which is a shame since I really wanna know what the song where they sing "Oi!" in the chorus is about. Their heart seems in the right place but this is too derivative. (MH)
(Dodsrall, www.likskjit.net)

LION OF JUDAH – "Universal Peace" CD

This DC band takes elements of bands like SWIZ and BURN and adds in their own eccentric twist of progressive hardcore. And the strained vocals work well with the music as the vocalist blasts out highly political lyrics. I kind of dug some of the more straightforward hardcore stuff, but things occasionally got a little too funky for my tastes and I thought that kind of overwhelmed the good stuff. But one thing that I definitely didn't like and has to go is the cover art. The psychedelic groove lettering and artwork is just too much! (RC)
(Youngblood, PO Box 236, Ephrata, PA 17522, www.youngbloodrecords.com)

LOCO GRINGOS – CD

According to the liner notes, this Texas band was a total party live (they existed in the late '80s). Like most "party-rock" bands, the music doesn't hold up without the general chaos and debauchery that might normally accompany it in a live setting. What you get here is the band's original album, which was posthumously released in 1992, along with some live bonus tracks. Apart from a couple of standout tracks, it's mostly boring medium-paced frat rock with songs about girls and drinking. I'm not doubting for a second that these guys were fun to experience live, but I guess in this instance you really had to be there. If you *were* there, this CD would probably be a welcome trip down memory lane. (AM)
(Saustex, PO Box 691356, San Antonio, TX 78269-1356, www.saustexmedia.com)

LOWER CLASS BRATS – "The New Seditionaries" LP

Fourth full-length by these Texan clockwork soldiers and their best for a long time. Rather than going for the full bore UK82 sound, they always favored a more melodic approach to the UK sound, with more of a MAJOR ACCIDENT, MENACE, or even COCK SPARRER vibe, which they pull as well as the bands they are aping. Solid stuff all the way through. (TB)
(Dirty Punk, BP 10302, 59666 Villenueve D'Ascr Cedex, FRANCE)

THE MAKEOUTS – "Worst Band Ever" EP

Four macho rock 'n' roll songs about checking out girls, doing "it" with them and then getting their hearts broken. I'd feel bad for them if I didn't suspect that they probably deserved it. (CK)
(Bachelor, 5421 Adnet, 186 AUSTRIA, www.bachelorrecords.com)

EL MAL JA ESTA FET / MOLOKO PLUS – split EP

MOLOKO PLUS plays melodic hardcore that is well performed, but just doesn't grab me by the nuts. It's good, but I get the feeling that these guys could do better. Their SPECIALS cover

outshines their original. EL MAL JA ESTA FET play DEAD KENNEDYS influenced punk rock/hardcore. Again, it's decent enough stuff, but I'm not feeling it. Both bands are almost there, but not quite. (KK)
(Carnus, no address)

MAN IS THE BASTARD – "D.I.Y.C.D." CD

Have you ever heard of powerviolence? Have you ever heard PISSED HAPPY CHILDREN? What about NEANDERTHAL? How about BASTARD NOISE? What about the million bands that spawned from the MAN IS THE BASTARD camp!? Fuck man, this is *it*! MITB is the band that pretty much started it all, and this is a re-release of the out of print CD originally put out by the almighty Slap-A-Ham Records compiling around nine or ten out of print splits and EPs, plus un-released tracks (54 songs in all). If you are still drawing a blank, try to imagine throwing together some total music/noise freaks together who build their own amps, guitars, basses, and noise machines. Mix that up with a pound of weed and hash and you will get some of the most dirge-y, manic, music ever created. WEST COAST POWERVIOLENCE! Let's fucking go! (NE)
(Deep Six, PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510)

THE MEASURE [SA] – "Union Pool" EP

Superb melodic punk with female vocals. Driving, powerful, and catchy as fuck, this is totally awesome. Imagine a punk DISCOUNT…but better. They have an album and I want it. (AD)
(Idiot Box Industries)

THE MOJOMATICS – "Songs for Faraway" CD

Two tunes in and I'm hooked. One band—and there's only two of them—that could almost rival THE REIGNING SOUND in songwriting brilliance. Injecting some infectious '60s whiteboy R 'n' B, such as THE PRETTY THINGS, with the tambourine folk of, let's say, MOUSE AND THE TRAPS with some raucous Delta blues and Atlantic soul. Christ, these boys can write them, play them, and sing them—retro without being, um, retro, folk without being cheesy, and soul without being another one of those soul/punk outfits. All brought together by their understanding of how to write a simple but great pop tune. Damn best record I've heard in a long long time. (SD)
(Alien Snatch, Morikeweg 1, 74199 Untergruppenbach, GERMANY, www.aliensnatch.com)

THE MONIKERS – "Fallen Angels / Absolute"

The twelfth installment of the Art of the Underground single series—a worthwhile endeavor for anyone who likes good, gravelly pop punk or good music in general. The 7" as a format can be a real cantankerous bastard. Let's hop on the plain talk express for a moment and admit that more often than not a 7" won't get more than a few plays before it's filed away. Very seldom can bands pack enough of a punch in such a short time that you just keep flipping that son of a bitch over and over. Most bands don't want to "waste" the really good shit on a 7". They're saving the A material for the album usually. THE MONIKERS lay down some album worthy, vinyl flipping shit here. Two songs worth and I've turned it over eight times while writing this review…yes I take that long to write reviews. The wheels turn slow. Anyway one of these guys was in DISCOUNT so he knows his way around the format and the aforementioned gravelly pop punk genre and the experience pays off. My only complaint…no lyric sheet, no contact info, no nothing comes with this record. (ST)
(Art of the Underground)

MONIKERS – "Eat Your Young" CD

Good, melodic punk with a poppy yet primal feel. The singer sounds just like the guy from DILLINGER FOUR. The playing is stripped down with almost a J CHURCH sound. Five songs on this disc. (RL)
(Kiss Of Death, www.kissofdeathrecords.com)

MONSTERS FROM MARS! – "Surfing Through a Creepy Castle" EP

Young enthusiastic instro surf group with fine originals, Farfisa trimmings, fine trashy drum sound, and a ton of reverb on the guitar (and props to the bass…just because it doesn't seem fair to always leave the bassist out when discussing a band's sound, right?). The inclusion of "Telstar" seems a tad obvious (nice stacatto work at the end though) but is made up for the much less obvious cover of "Toxic," a BRITNEY SPEARS hit (I'm taking the MONSTERS' word for it), which they turn into a piece of twisted instrumental mania. It's nice to know that someone can still pull this stuff off so well: recommended. (DD)
(Tic Tac Totally, www.tictactotally.com)

MORTAL COMBAT – CD

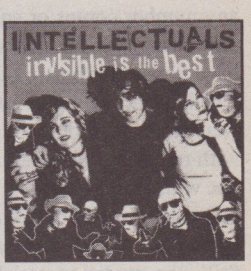
A zillion-song CD of fast Indonesian thrash (on a label from Singapore) featuring some insanely throat-shredding vocals. I put this in the same category as Japanese thrashers like EXCLAIM, or even some '90s stuff like CHARLES BRONSON (but without the sass factor), though MORTAL COMBAT also throws in some occasional rock parts as well as some occasional blast beats. Overall, this is a cool document of a top band from this underappreciated DIY punk scene. (GN)
(Thrash Steady, www.thrashsteadysyndicate.com)

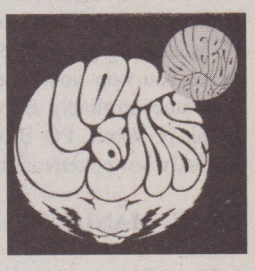
MUGRE – "It Ends Now" EP

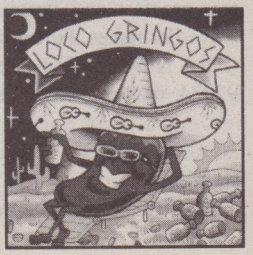
This SoCal hardcore band hammers their point home with an all out attack of ripping hardcore with enraged sounding vocals spewing out politically charges lyrics in English and Spanish. There is definitely some melodic overtones throughout this EP, but don't let that fool you. At the heart of it all this knocks the needle off the rage meter. (RC)
(Collapse, 6131 Kiser Dr, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, www.collapse records.com)

MY RULES – "Am I the Moron?" EP

I love good punk lyrics—they don't have to be deep or poetic, but if they say what I want to say, the song becomes part of my personal soundtrack. MY RULES plays energetic mid-to-fast tempo hardcore with heated words for the stupid society we live within. These were the words I wanted to scream 20 years ago and they're the same way I feel today. It seems like the same shit goes down in Portugal, where these guys are from, as it does here. The music on this reminds me of mid-'80s hardcore like STALAG 13, FAITH, and some of the better stuff on Mystic Records. Six tracks with a lyric sheet and on banana yellow wax, and of course points for keeping in the tradition of naming







your band in reference to our culture's past. Do yourself a favor and check this out. (BG)
(We Love Pandas, Petrinska 16, 150 00 Prague 5, CZECH REPUBLIC)

NAKATOMI PLAZA – "Unsettled" CD

A band whose sound is all over the place. Sometimes they play post punk with gal vocals with a semi-angular sound. Other times the sound is more abrasive with hardcore gal vocals. Maybe a more punk PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES? As a whole this band has a cool sound with emo-core leanings. (RL)
(Red Leader, www.nakatomiplaza.com)

NASAL BOYS – "Lost and Found" LP

'70s Euro-punk fanatics have yet another excavation to salivate over in *Lost And Found*, an LP compiling all known studio and live material from Switzerland's NASAL BOYS. Surely you've heard "Hot Love," one of the finest goddamn punkers to ever come outta Europe, on any number comps or snobby mix tapes passed your way over the years. What you might not have heard are the six other studio tunes, all of which stand up to "Hot Love," proving they were no one-hit obscuro. As is usually the case with reissues of this nature, the platter is beefed out with an entirely live B-side, which, though passable in sound quality, doesn't do as much to further the band's legacy as most would hope. Still, the studio material and great packaging (liners in English!) are certainly worth whatever import price-tag and hoop-jumping are required to get this is your grubby Yankee paws. An essential reissue. (MC)
(Swiss Punk, www.swisspunk.ch)

NEON MANIACS – "Nothing's Safe" EP

Stripey shirt, new wave sunglasses-wearing retro punk here from these SoCal geezers. "Nothing's Safe" is a short and sweet ripoff of the BUZZCOCKS' "No Reply," while the B-side sounds like RED CROSS with more distortion but less charm. The "bonus track" sounds like a STITCHES 45 played on 33. Despite being nothing groundbreaking, this record will make you bop your head, and possibly even pogo uncontrollably. Be warned. (PC)
(Punk N Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834, www.pukenvomitrecords.com)

NEON MANIACS – "Radio Act/Crazy World"

Wow. This is the best record I have heard from these guys. Two catchy, bratty punk tunes that are fast and furious, but with some new wave flourishes. Fun stuff. (CK)
(Puke N Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834, www.pukenvomitrecords.com)

NEUTRAL BOY – "Weapon of Mass Seduction" CD

Two (male) axe heroes. All female rhythm section. Judging by the sleeve photo, not the youngest rockers around, but proud to label themselves "Seattle Sex Punk." It certainly takes all sorts. These, er, studs, nevertheless manage to whip out thirteen (a sexy number!?) tracks of speedy, sweaty, stripped down punk, with a suitably snotty DEAD BOYS/US BOMBS sensibility. Old folk still can rock. The rest…er, well, beauty is in the eye of the beholder... (RK)
(www.myspace.com/neutralboy)

NORMAN BATES & THE SHOWERHEADS – "Psycho Too" CD

Never have heard of this band before now, which surprises me. They were from the late '80s/early '90s NY scene and play a kind of hybrid of RAMONES style punk rock with elements that remind me of the DWARVES and KRAUT. I'm not super into the lyrical content, which reminds me of bands like MURPHY'S LAW, but it does have a kind of raw street thug mentality. I guess it goes with growing up in Queens in the '80s. The vocals really sound a lot like BLAG DAHLIA's to me. The recording quality is good and this CD definitely has a couple jams on it. If you like dirty bar rock this could hold some interest for you. (WK)
(Dead City, www.deadcityny.com)

NOTHINGTON – "One For The Road" EP

I helped Dan at Left Off The Dial design the inner labels so obviously I have to say those are fucking perfect. The print didn't come out as well as it should but that's hardly my fault. Dan will have to bring that up with United. NOTHINGTON has this dude who used to be in TSUNAMI BOMB but decided to start a band that I like. Good for him. It's always a shame when nice gents are in bands that are beneath them in quality. I'm sure they're nice as people I just never got down with the records. Anyway this 7" is a good intro to this band and their forthcoming LP that comes out probably right around the time this goes to print. It could be just as home on No Idea as it is on Left Off The Dial. Gritty, Gainesville-y style punk but from San Francisco, which I like because it's close and I only travel to The Fest and occasionally to see my mom. (ST)
(Left Off The Dial, PO Box 3941, Oakland, CA 94609, www.leftoffthedial.net)

NO TURNING BACK – "Holding On" CD

Full-on, well-produced, stand-your-ground hardcore just as you'd expect from a Bridge Nine Records release—this time from the prolific Dutch force NO TURNING BACK. With lots of tough power chords, heavy bass lines, veins-in-the-forehead screams of personal frustration, and drums that break the skins, this will definitely be embraced by those who dig hard-hitting, and slightly metallic, wall-of-sound beatdown-core like STRIKING DISTANCE mixed with MADBALL. (BG)
(Bridge Nine, www.bridge9.com)

NUMBSKULL – "Final Days of Torture" LP

Cool vinyl re-release of a 1985 demo by this obscuro group of Midwestern misfits. Like a number of quality bands over the years, NUMBSKULL seemed to feel, instinctively perhaps, a contempt for by-the-numbers hardcore—as well as for sub-moronic metalheads, the likes of which they were probably intimately familiar, based as they were in Cleveland, Ohio in the mid-'80s. Their resulting exercise in bass/drum/vocal dirge, dripping with sarcasm and affected couldn't-care-less boredom, might be loosely characterized as the middle ground between FLIPPER and BLACK SABBATH. Sound good? It is. Act fast though, 'cause this has been out for a while and is limited to 300 copies. (CS)
(My Mind's Eye, mymindseyerecords.com)

DAS OATH – 11"

Most folks will know what to expect with this band by now and this is more of the same: well played, frenetic hardcore with squealed vocals and a healthy spoonful of smug artiness that I find harder and harder to swallow. Sure it's good, but their cynicism and obtuseness just gets on my nerves. If you dig their vibe then this rips; it left me pretty cold though. (TB)
(Youth Attack, www.ihateyouthattack.com)

DAS OATH / AMPERE – split CD

This is a limited edition or so you probably missed out already, but, you know, that's OK. Production-wise this falls somewhere between a GARY GLITTER record and maybe like the BOLD 7"? These revolutionary bands decided to do a SPITBOY covers EP—pretty liberating music. I am gonna go meditate in my womyn teepee now. Om. Then I will sell this CD to you via eBay and include a free personal liberation manifesto. Thank you DAS OATH and AMPERE for giving me enough money for two weeks of coffee, you guys are the greatest. (LG)
(Clean Plate)

OROKU – "Living Through The End of Time" CD

Goddamn, OROKU really brings it with some crushing metallic crust. It alternately reminds me WAKE UP ON FIRE and NEUROSIS. There are also these slow dark spaces within this record where it is mostly cello and it's really beautiful and haunting, a little bit like OPETH. The overall political sentiment of the record can be summed up by a few choice song titles, "Disgust for Mankind," "Meaningless," "Terror," and "The End is Near." This is exactly the metal I want right now: it's heavy, it's dark, and it's punk. Fuck yeah. (AA)
(Inimical, PO Box 2803, Seattle, WA 98111)

THE PINK FITS – "Fuzzyard Gravelot" CD

Earlier in this issue I review a CD by THE HICKOIDS. I would encourage THE PINK FITS and any other band who plays rockabilly, but also wants to be a punk, to pick up that CD and, of course, something by THE CRAMPS. There is no doubt this band is made up of competent musicians, but bragging that you recorded eleven songs in four hours on the back of your CD doesn't impress me. Throw in some creativity, some irreverence, and some plain old fun. Then we'll talk. (CK)
(Off the Hip, www.offthehip.com.au)

LA PIOVRA – "Risacca" EP

Italy's LA PIOVRA, which apparently means "the Octopus," drops two tracks of breakdown-filled thrashing punk with a bit of a first wave LA feel to it. It's also got some more "rock" moments. This 7" is mostly mid paced but somehow maintains the "thrash" feel to it. Features members who did time in OHUZARU and L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI, which totally makes sense as this record would most likely appeal to fans of both. I will definitely listen to this again. How's about you give it a try? (JU)
(Punks Before Profits, PO Box 1148, Grand Rapids, MI 49501)

POBEL UND GESOCKS – "Als Diue Bilder Saufen Lernten" 3 x DVD

I guess this is for the fans. Three DVDs. I confess, I only watched about 40 minutes in total. But here's what I could glean: POBEL UND GESOCKS is a skinhead/Oi! band from Germany; they've been around since the mid-'90s; the singer takes his shirt off for every show (and displays chest hair, a slight paunch, and some tattoos); they seem like nice chaps; they seem fairly popular, and play the gamut of small clubs to huge outdoor festivals; they play pretty basic, tuneful, singalong Oi! stuff, not a million miles from early PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES; their fans seem to be a healthy mix of skins and punks; the bassist likes to sing football songs; elements of their crowd like to join him in this endeavor; Disc One is lots of songs live at various places—mainly small clubs—two or three songs from a variety of shows; all one camera; all decent(ish) sound quality; Disc Two seems to be more interviews/behind the scenes type stuff; it's all in German (as is all of this stuff), so I can't understand a word of it; Roi, singer of the LAST RESORT appears briefly in one of the segments; he (Roi) now has long hair, and looks like a PINK FLOYD roadie; Disc Three seems to be largely the band performing at larger outdoor festivals, Warped Tour style, together with some early archive live stuff from the late '90s, when the singer was still keeping his shirt on while performing...So, if you like decent German Oi!, reasonably recorded live stuff, and/or have a fetish for 30-something skinheads with a penchant for going topless, you might want to invest in this. Otherwise, it's a lengthy, exhaustive, (I'm sure) for fans only effort. Speaking German would probably enhance one's appreciation (or not) too, I suspect. (RK)
(Hans, www.hans-records.de)

POUND FOR POUND – "For Our Fallen Brothers"

Looking at the CD, artwork, and song titles I didn't give this much of a chance. And while I was surprised, I wasn't wrong. I was surprised how much POUND FOR POUND sounds like SICK OF IT ALL but wasn't surprised at how tired this sounds. For fun, lets look at the opening lines of each song, which I think give you a great idea of what this sounds like. "Stabbed in the heart once again" (ugh!), "Life and times how it stings," "This world is full of hurt" (awe tough guys, cry me a river), "This is our life brothers 'till the end," "I've been living the past," "You've been dead for awhile," "Everyday's a struggle to get by," "This never ending weight" (go vegan then!), "We who are left must pick up again," "I destroy my enemies," and "In a tie where man is drunk." Pass. (MH)
(Surprise Attack, PO Box 63704, Philadelphia, PA 19147)

PLYUSCHI – CD

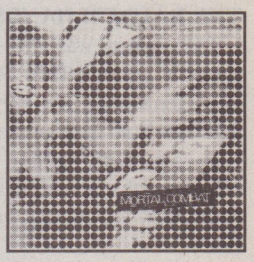
PLYUSCHI hails from Irkutsk, Russia, which is way the fuck in Eastern Siberia (a region you can learn a lot about by reading the brilliant poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko...but I digress…). Like a lot of Russian bands, their music is a curious blend of influences, most notably sing-along German punk, Eastern European folk music, the DEAD KENNEDYS, and mosh metal. PLYUSCHI employs a clarinet, too, which lends the occasional crazy circus feeling, a la BERURIER NOIR. These guys have been rocking together for eight years or so and they still play with great enthusiasm and conviction. The disc also includes a really cool clip from a Russian TV show that did a feature on the band—it's all in Russian but entertaining nonetheless. (PC)
(Hedera, plushi@list.ru)

RADON – "Metric Buttloads of Rock" CD

A new RADON record. Not an old record that never came out, not some compilation of songs that never went on singles or comps, but a brand new, newly recorded RADON record. If you don't know who they are I don't want to talk to you. I sat in a record store for five years yammering on about them and if you weren't listening then goddamn it I'll probably *still* tell you because shit they're good. One of the first bands to establish a "Gainesville" sound and among the many to never get their full due for it on account of either breaking up or just not being appreciated while they were around. Their only proper full length *28* is a fucking work of art. I don't know how else to put it. It's not just a good record, it's not just a great record, it's a fucking work of art that should be playing in museums everywhere while Mike Collins serves tallboys in a Miami Dolphins sweatsuit. But enough about *28*, this review is about the new record. Is it as good as *28*? No, it is not. Nothing can be! Once again…that record is a fucking masterpiece of modern music. A feat hard to repeat. Is it still fucking awesome and will you be disappointment free? If you aren't a total wang the answer is yes. RADON is back and is actually playing shows outside of Gainesville this time so cease any wangery you may be practicing, buy this record and go fucking see them. (ST)
(No Idea, www.noidearecords.com)

RAPPRESAGLIA – "1981-1983" LP

This old Italian band is just fucking raging! I am not one of the people here at *MRR* who has a complete catalog of obscure Euro hardcore releases contained in their brain to reference at all times so I always feel kind of unnerved when I get classic European hardcore for review. I do know, however, that "Attack" is one of the greatest punk



songs of all time. Seriously, it's the sound of a 50 car pile up falling over a cliff while a nuclear bomb goes off and Reagan comes back from the dead. Golnar put it on a mix tape for me, first song, and it's so good I didn't listen to the rest of the tape because of being unable to get past "Attack" without rewinding it over and over. It's so raging and nihilistic and exciting. Perfect soundtrack for bombing hills, eating pizza, destroying the state, you know, just being a punk. The second song is originally from the same comp EP as "Attack," and is also raging, but the rest of this LP (from early demos) is a little bland, just because the first two songs are *so killer*. I think the aforementioned comp was a Italian Oi comp, I might be wrong, but it's weird to me because RAPPRESAGLIA is more like crazy amped up hardcore than Oi, but what do I know. Anyway, this is totally essential and great. (LG)
(Agipunk, www.agipunk.com)

THE RAUNCH HANDS – "Bigg Topp" CD

Jeez, when was the last release by Crypt Records alumni THE RAUNCH HANDS? I can't remember, but they're still (back?) at it and there's no trace of mellowness, progressiveness, emo-icity, or any of the other dreaded afflictions that sometimes set in with old hands. Nope, they are holding true to the Rock. Salute! (DD)
(Licorice Tree, PO Box 301975, Austin TX 78703, www.licoricetree.com)

REAGAN'S BONES – "Reaganomics" EP

Members of Chattanooga's QUEER WÜLF move to Asheville, NC, and bring the rock with them! REAGAN'S BONES play sloppy, no holds barred punk rock that's firmly rooted in the early days of punk and hardcore without sounding contrived or retro. You can hear everything from FLIPPER to JFA to INTENSIFIED BLUEBEARD to POISON IDEA all mashed together in this well-recorded yet totally fucked up and raw sounding six-song 7"er. And the packaging—letterpress/woodblock-style cover and excellent artful insert booklet—should be seen as lesson to other bands and labels on how to do it right. Uck-fay es-yay! (PC)
(Jiiica, PO Box 4985, Berkeley, CA 94704)

THE REJECTED – "Fool For A Day- King For A Lifetime" CD

Finland's REJECTED reminds me a lot of another Scandinavian band 59 TIMES THE PAIN. I say that because they both had that cross of melodic hardcore a la GOOD RIDDANCE and RANCID. The other thing that they have in common with 59 TIMES THE PAIN is that THE REJECTED plays their songs well but don't seem to be able to write one that sounds unique. In other words, this CD is solid but generic. (JF)
(Hell's Tone, PO Box 162, 53101 LPR, FINLAND)

RINGERS – "Lame Jokes and Sneers/ Walking Ghosts"

I came in late to the game on the Art of the Underground label's Single Series, but so far everything I've heard is great! What the series lacks in packaging (which is basically everything—same plain sleeve every time, no insert or band info…yes, there's probably some info on the interweb, but it's nice to have something in the record for posterity's sake, don'cha think?) it more than makes up for in quality tunes. Both RINGERS songs here are powerful pop punk hits that one could compare as much to DILLINGER FOUR as to early British Isles bands like SHAM 69 or STIFF LITTLE FINGERS. If that's not an endorsement, I don't know what is. (PC)
(Art of the Underground, www.artoftheunderground.com)

ROTTEN FUX – "Surgeon" EP

One of a slew of young Bay Area hardcore bands putting out records and playing shows these days, and perhaps the only band in the area mining the sound of GAI this unabashedly and this well. This totally has that primitive sound down—the one-two-one-two drumming, the unrelenting guitar squall, and gnarly vocals that sound like they were lifted straight off of the LSD flexi. No lyrics with this one, but song titles like "I Like Drugs" and "Sick of Life" manage to paint an adequately fucked up picture. Feedback-noize-as-guitar-solo is one way to my heart, or at least into my record collection; this record is even better than the first ATROCIOUS MADNESS EP. If this band improves as exponentially as that band did, by the time they put out an LP it will probably detonate loudly enough to wipe us all off the map. (GN)
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

ROTTEN SOUND – "Consume to Contaminate" LP

One of the best grindcore bands going and one of my favorite releases of 2006. This is an EP on a 12", being 45 rpm and all of 15 minutes long. I did like their more melodic last LP but this new EP is ridiculously heavy and fast to the point where I just smile while listening. ROTTEN SOUND has always had some great lyrics. Some might call them political but they're more social, with an awareness of people and how they are, well, often not cool. I like this so much I'm at a loss for words. Blistering fast grindcore at it's finest. In the same world as NASUM or GADGET. (MH)
(Power It Up, Zum Holzeelde 12, 31226 Piene, GERMANY, www.power-it-up.de)

SCREAM POET, SCREAM – "Illegitimate Descendent of a Pope" CD

As I'm sure you could tell from the name alone: emo. Pretty typical slow tempo stop-and-start screamo fare to begin with, but the music shifts to a more Dischord '86 sound with some extra melody added to the mix, then by the end of this six-song disc the band veers more towards the JAWBREAKER realm (i.e. memorable hooks and some spoken word samples). Is it possible that I don't hate a band called SCREAM POET, SCREAM? (PC)
(3310 S. Aberdeen St, Chicago, IL 60608, www.screampoetscream.com)

THE SKUDS – "Millions of Dead" EP

Hailing from Augusta, Georgia THE SKUDS turn out fast, metal-edged house wrecking punk, reminiscent of ENGLISH DOGS but more US metal/punk influenced with solid/minimal chord progressions (in this case less is more), gruff rhyming vox, good dynamic changes, and song structures. Large poster folds out to reveal that the SKUDS have more fun, beer, and friends than anyone here at MRR. Good party. (BS)
(Skuds, www.theskuds.com)

SLEEPING PILOT – "Panic Sex" CD

Vocally like a sassy Alex Ulloa. Musically like a screeching trainwreck of hardcore and modern rock and roll. Once again a sassy Alex Ulloa. You'll probably listen to this and think I'm crazy but I'm telling you it's in there. I think the album title is a bit pretentious but overall these guys are actually pushing the hardcore/rock genre forward and doing something with it that doesn't bore the shit out of me or make me want to throw this record away and listen to SUICIDE FILE. (ST)
(Sonic Deadline, www.sonicdeadline.cjb.net)

SOCIAL CIRCKLE – "Static Eyes" EP

Solid punk rock that borrows equally from pre-Rollins FLAG and first wave UK punk. SOCIAL CIRCKLE has put out a classic-sounding EP with a convincingly retro aesthetic but since there are so few bands playing this type of stuff this well, they manage to stand out. I'm sure they feel tempted to speed these songs up at every practice but they've managed to show considerable restraint, thus leaving the hooks and catchiness intact. The title track in particular is a mixtape sure thing that could sit right next to anything off the UK SUBS first LP and not be out of place. I love the way various instruments just drop out at different times. (AM)
(No Way, 13 S. Blvd #1, Richmond, VA 23220, www.nowayrecords.com)

SOMETHING'S WRONG / TROUBLE TROUBLE TROUBLE – split EP

What we got here are two bands from Asheville, doing the prototypical Asheville thing, AKA they could be non-folk acts on Plan-It-X records. Now, while there are two bands on this record, only one of the bands is any good. TROUBLE TROUBLE TROUBLE plays good,

female fronted punk rock that has plenty of passion, singalong parts, and is all around good times. SOMETHING'S WRONG, meanwhile, is further proof that for every SEXY or CARRIE NATIONS that makes this style work, there are twenty other bands that regardless of the enthusiasm they have, can't write even one decent song to record. Oh well, it's not the worst thing I heard this month. (JF)
(Zack, 34 Edgehill Dr, Asheville, NC 28801)

SO MUCH HATE – "How We Feel" LP

SO MUCH HATE's debut LP originally came out in '87, and this re-release is captures their best moment on vinyl with obvious care. The songs themselves aren't atypical for surging Norwegian HC, but SO MUCH HATE changes the mix with surprising changes of pace (as in the arresting "Double Standards") while mixing arresting guitar figures with chugga-chugga guitars on the next ("Apathy"). The band's complex song structures demand a second listening, while the smart production ties everything into a musically coherent package. Strongly recommended. (SS)
(Norwegian Leather, www.norwegianleather.com)

THE STRANGER – "Prison Called Life" EP

I'm generally not a fan of the standing bass. Nor am I, generally, a fan of bands referring to instruments as "six strings," "four strings," "sticks," "skins," and "throat." (These guys don't use all of these, but they use enough of them to raise the hairs on the back of my neck.) And I think we could go all the way back to X-RAY SPEX to find a saxophone that I've liked. Still, I find myself really liking this record. I'm too old to change my ways, but I do like it. It's country-ish, rockabilly-ish, even twangy, sure, but it's also got the soul and sense of urgency that makes great punk rock. (KK)
(Haunted Town, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #169, Chicago, IL 60647)

NIKKI SUDDEN – "The Truth Doesn't Matter" 2xLP

This is a posthumous release of the final recordings by the late SWELL MAPS ringleader. It's a fitting sendoff—fifteen expertly-crafted songs that vary from upbeat '70s pop in the vein of STEVE HARLEY & COCKNEY REBEL, DAVID BOWIE, and ROXY MUSIC, to mellow country-ish folk ballads, to fuzzy garage punk. The recurring theme uniting all the songs can be found in the poignant, nostalgic, and depressive lyrics. It's almost like he knew he was going and had some final goodbyes to say. I know it's easy to infer something like that in hindsight. While it's definitely a great record, it's a real downer. Better if Sudden had been around so see it released, to show the world that he came through it alive. (AM)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

TDK – "Esto es una Empresa Capitalista" LP

Have I mentioned that I like Spanish punk? Well, I do. And this first TDK (Terrorism, Destruction, and Kaos) LP—first released in 1985—is no exception. Their sound is a perfect mix of wild and energetic punk rock and early hardcore. There is a bit of the DEAD KENNEDYS in TDK's sound, both in the occasional surf-tinged guitar leads and the flamboyant vocals, which—don't worry—are nowhere near as annoying as Jello's, though overall TDK stands out as unique. They aren't as sing-songy as country-mates RIP or ESKORBUTO, and overall they have more piss 'n' vinegar in their raw sound than some of their snottier US counterparts, which is just fine by me. I am not sure if the majority of the world punk scene will ever pay as much attention to Spanish punk as it deserves, but if it does this would be one of the best places to start. This is the perfect caustic hardcore punk record, you fans of the YOUNG WASTENERS LP take note and send off for this right away... (GN)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

TDK – "Carnevision" LP

With the re-release of this prized LP—their second—from 1986, TDK's distinctive hardcore/punk amalgam recalls East Bay Ray's aggressive guitars, albeit filtered through a Spanish sound blended with the aggro of great Brazilian outfits like RATOS DE PORAO. This re-release captures the band strengths and weakness (but mostly the former) in a set of tunes that often features searing power-chord guitar work ("Nadie en Concrete"), moderated a bit by the vocals, which have too much prominence in some tunes. (SS)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

THE TERMINALS – "Forget About Never" LP

Dirty, distorted rockabilly. The female singer has a nice voice and the music is fast and frantic. The LP sounds like it was recorded live. There is pounding drums and a wailing organ, then every once in a while the guitar kicks in real loud. (CK)
(Dead Beat, PO Box 361392, Cleveland, OH 44136, www.dead-beat-records.com)

THAT'S MY DAUGHTER – "Virgin Appeal" CD

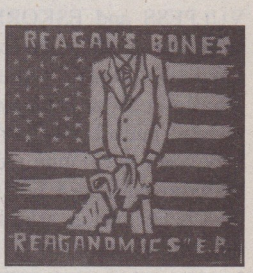
If this band didn't have the worst aesthetic ever they would actually be decent. They have melodic female and male vocals over poppy rock 'n' roll that isn't *punk* exactly, but isn't un-punk either. If they were snottier (and much, much, *much* better) I could compare them to the RONDELLES or even the EYES, but they're not quite there yet. Dust off the first RONDELLES LP instead if you're in the mood for indie punk pop, and be glad that band had the good sense not to have the album art THAT'S MY DAUGHTER has. (GN)
(www.thatsmydaughter.net)

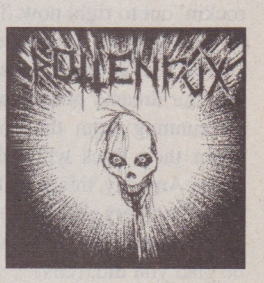
THOMAS FUNCTION – "Insignificants" EP

There is piano on this record *and I don't hate it!* This band has been getting lavished with praise lately, and for good reason. Imagine RICHARD HELL singing for XTC with DIY-level attempts at ROXY MUSIC production. I don't know if that description makes any sense at all, but I guess what I'm trying to say is that this is glammy lo-fi pop that seems to be reaching for something more but is that much better for not getting there—like if they spent ten grand recording these songs they could only make them worse. Great stuff. Seek out. (AM)
(Tic Tac Totally, www.tictactotally.com)

TOTALITÄR – "Vi Är Eliten" EP

A riptide of caustic and hook-filled new material from TOTALITÄR, four songs, all standout stompers performed with nearly unparalleled mastery and dementia-inducing precision. Keeping this a step apart from the herd are the musical hooks melded into unique and truly maniacal





chord progressions. The SVART PARAD cover "Sista Kriget" has this eerie and infectious single note drawl at the end of each verse measure that instantly worms itself straight into your psyche. After a listen I was singing and hand drumming the songs to myself at work, on the train, all day. The easiest universally heard riff phenomena to liken it to is classic BLACK SABBATH, from the first time you hear it, it resonates perfectly and immediately scribes itself onto your brain. As close to a "perfect record" as you want anything to be. This is essential TOTALITÄR. (BS)
(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

TOY DOLLS – "Treasured Tracks" CD

It says "Live" on the back. Listen kids, when purchasing CDs by old British bands, carefully scan the back for any evidence of live tracks—and if there are any live tracks then avoid at all costs. It's a rip-off, usually shitty British labels continuing to scam a buck off the rights of crappy after-the-fact releases they bought in the mid/late-'80s. The sound quality here is fine and there are a lot of songs, but I just don't know why someone would want this unless they're a *huge* TOY DOLLS fan. (AD)
(Secret, no address)

LA UVI – "Ya Esta Bien" EP

One in a series of four classic Spanish punk EPs reissued on picture disc this month by Munster Records (two of the other three—VULPESS and ESKORBUTO—are reviewed in this issue, while the fourth—the very underrated OX POW—wasn't sent in to us. Munster?). What can I say, LA UVI is one of my favorite punk bands from Spain, and even if they don't have quite the name recognition of the aforementioned ESKORBUTO, this EP at least is as good as anything that band ever put out. Mid-tempo rock 'n' roll punk that seemed to come out of every corner of Spain in the '80s and that I can picture PELIGRO SOCIAL rockin' out to right now. This record has kind of a vague tinge of new wave along with an almost BLITZ feel at times. Like, I can totally imagine the four dreamy punk boys on the cover of this EP running from the cops in an '80s movie about their lives while the song "La Policia" plays. Anyway, this is a classic EP from a country with a very rich punk tradition—get all four of the reissues from Munster, I promise you will be glad you did. (GN)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

THE VENDETTA - "Demolition" CD

Polished AC/DC and MOTÖRHEAD influenced hard rock HC. Stand out lyrics from the song "Powerload" are, "My horny lady ain't got no shame." Wow. There's a little '80s hardcore influence lurking in here somewhere, but for the most part it's just over the top cock rock. (AA)
(www.power-load.com)

THEE VIBRAFINGERS – "They Vibrate" CD

THE VIBRAFINGERS are another dirty garage rock band and hail from France. I don't really know too much about this whole scene of bar bands but it seems like these freaks play with a skill level that is worthy of releasing a CD. I can't say they are really my thing and overall they don't really interest me, but they cover THE DEAD BOYS, which gives you an idea of where their musical influences lie, although who is really as good as the DEAD BOYS currently playing rock? The singer has a high squeaky voice and sort of sounds like a Euro FLESHIES singer. That's about all I got. (WK)
(Turbo Rock, www.turborock.com)

THE VICIOUS – "Alienated" 12"

I started to notice this Swedish band getting a bit of hype in certain circles following the release of their single and first 12" EP on Wasted Sounds, though I honestly couldn't figure out what the fuss was all about. I started warming up to them, however, after hearing their most recent 7", and this new ten-track 12" is another solid effort. Compared to their earlier output, the songs are livelier, the hooks are stronger, and overall the band sounds much more cohesive. The title track is the best thing they've done so far, and there are a number of other winners as well (two also appear on the aforementioned *Obsessive* EP). For the uninitiated, THE VICIOUS plays sparse, gloomy, late-'70s style punk lead by a clean down-stroked guitar—I'm reminded of Trap Records bands like THE STIPHNOYDS or even THE WIPERS' earliest material—and an unmistakable vocalist. Actually, the dude has such a nasal whine that it gets a bit difficult to listen to over the course of ten songs… But other than that, this is another fine release the likes of which you've surely come to expect from Feral Ward. Great layout, too. I hope this band continues to grow and improve. (CS)
(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

VI GRUER OSS – "Kjell Magne Bondesvik" EP

Manic Scandi-core from Norway in the vein of classics like MOB 47. The tempo is unrelenting, but the riffs are simple and catchy and the playing is sloppy enough to keep things interesting and appealing to the true punx. Good raw recording and cool blown-out clean guitar sound as well. Lyrics appear to be in Norwegian. My one and only minor gripe is with the faux-cut 'n' paste layout that was clearly done on a computer. It's so simple and basic, why even bother? I mean, it's like using a table saw to open a bag of chips. The strangest thing about this EP is that is was released over two years ago in 2004. Took long enough to finally make it to *MRR*! Anyway, despite the fact that it's hand-numbered and limited to 525, I'm sure you can still track it down, and I wouldn't talk you out of trying. (CS)
(Plata/Drittprofitt, no address)

THE VISITORS – CD

A New York band that dishes out the garage rock'n'roll with a punk edge. A little RAMONES, NEW YORK DOLLS, and PHIL SPECTOR are all obvious influences. Rough production gives this a vintage CBGB feel. This is a decent release for a band that is going for that sound without any ties to the past. (RL)
(Eschatone, www.officialvisitors.com)

JOHNNY VOMIT – "Extreme Championship Drinking" CD

This is by far the fucking worst piece of shit I got to review this month and maybe all year. This is exactly what I hate about crap bands that have no sort of artistic talent and sit around at the local bar every night talking about scoring with some degenerate hag that is too wasted to say no. It carries over to the music, just shit three-chord butt rock riffs with sexist lyrics and bad inside jokes. I mean check the brilliant song "Fuck": "I want to smell your juicy slit, come on baby suck my dick." The insert features a party collage on every other page with pictures of the members partying with porn stars. I bet at least one of these dudes, who all look in their mid-'30s, lives with his parents. I wouldn't be surprised if even all of them did. If GG ALLIN AND THE MURDER JUNKIES are your favorite band ever JOHNNY VOMIT might have some hope of impressing you. No, I doubt even those dumbfucks would like this shit. (WK)
(NGS, www.ngsrecords.com)

VULPESS – "Me Gusta Ser Una Zorra /Inkisición"

Holy shit! VULPESS is the answer clearly, I'm not sure what the question would be exactly but I do know they are so great and inspiring. I think they were like the Spanish equivalent of the SEX PISTOLS, in that they were the most notorious punk band at the formative stages of Spanish punk. I heard a rumour that they played the Spanish version of *Top of the Pops* and caused much outrage in a similar manner to the SEX PISTOLS inflammatory appearance on the Bill Grundy show in England. This 7" comes as part of a four-disc set on Munster Records, with some other classic Spanish punx like ESKORBUTO, which you should obviously save up your pennies and get because it's a totally killer item with life changing characteristics. The back of this disc features a collage of outraged newspaper clippings probably relating to the aforementioned TV appearance, which make me wish I could read Spanish because it all looks very scandalous and rad. This band is just cool, I wish that the SEX PISTOLS had been four tough girls, or rather that VULPESS had had the

impact of the SEX PISTOLS on worldwide people's perceptions of punk. The music is trashed out and fierce; they totally own their sound, the vocals are yelled out and incendiary. It's the sound of true punk, of people realizing that the limitations placed on them by other people's idea of "real music" were totally bogus. This is totally the music you would want to be playing as the city burns and the girls take over. (LG)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

WARKRIME – "Give War a Chance" EP

This rabid pack of nihilistic little brats from SF and the mean streets of Tiburon, CA (look it up!) has finally unleashed its wrath on the world. Musically, this one takes cues from VERBAL ABUSE and, to borrow from Mr. Cordova's earlier reference, URBAN WASTE. Seriously amazing! Like the first wave of hardcore bands that played the way they did because they knew no other, WARKRIME has that same feel, like it absolutely had to be done. One thing I'd like to note is it seems rather convenient that the lyric sheet drops off when you hear "President Chaos" mention sexism, racism, homophobia, and the homeless. I think someone may have spent too much time listening to the VILE *Solution* LP. Fuck right-wing punks! Offensive simply for the sake of being offensive = Boring. It don't matter what I say though. They don't want my approval anyways. Ah, I miss being 17 and stupid. (JU)
(No Way, www.nowayrecords.com)

THE WEAPONS OF MASS SEDUCTION – "Desperate Men... and the Women Who Love Them" CD

Dense, lo-fi garage with a slight hint of the evil, chaotic, drugged-out spazz of THE MOTARDS. A deuce of Ottawan no-marks with way too much time on their hands, way too much speed and acid, and way too many JAY REATARD records. I'm digging it the more I hear it, could even end up loving it. I hated the name, and now after hearing their racket it all starts to make sense. It's ugly, it's primitive, and at times it even flirts with Satan. Makes the BLACK KEYS sound like your mum's wedding band. Yep, it rocks and yep, it rules. (SD)
(Seductive Sounds, weaponsofmassemail@yahoo.com)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT HEROES – "Move to Press" EP

You know what you are getting with Charged Records, and there's something reassuring about that. Less full blown UK82 than a lot of bands on this label, more like Finland's WASTED or if ONE WAY SYSTEM were on the Warped tour. It's fast and catchy, but almost too catchy...I can picture huge circle pits of 13-year olds all over this shit. Don't get me wrong, smug generalizations aside, this is a really decent record if you like some tune with yer spiky punk. (TB)
(Charged, PO Box 3118, Jersey City, NJ 07303)

WHAT LIES WITHIN – "Discography" CD

Chugga chugga, melodic quiet parts, floor punch parts, metallic, quirky tech parts—modern hardcore that stylistically and quickly jumps between sounds in the course of eleven two to three minute songs. The kind of thing that for a second sounds like solid intense fast hardcore with grouchy vocals and then suddenly gets all LINKIN PARK styled spoken word over a quiet part, then gets all intense and screamy then techs out into guitar noodles, then slams into heavy mosh parts or an acoustic bridge. Really well delivered, played, and recorded, but skimpily packaged (a single one-panel insert with no lyrics, photos, or where these songs originally came from). Good retrospective for local fan or fans of this modern style (whatever you could call it— nü-hardcore? Metal-tech core? Post-sXe mutant core? ADD-core? Noodle chugga?) (KS)
(Hold True, PO Box 85, Bolton, MA 01740, www.holdtrue.com)

WHISKEY SUNDAY – "Sunshine" EP

Three new tracks and the best song off their *Maldecido* album, the one with Annie from THIS IS MY FIST! on guest vox. Think chunky, riff-heavy melodic punk with San Jose's answer to Frankie Stubbs on the mic. Every time I see this band they get better and better. On the whole this EP is great, but I'm 100% certain that I never need to hear WHISKEY SUNDAY's version of the ANIMALS' "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" ever again. My only complaint…no lyric sheet, no contact info, no nothing comes with this record. (AM)
(1-2-3-4-Go!, attn: S. Stevenson, 2928 Telegraph Ave #3, Oakland, CA 94609, www.1234gorecords.com)

WOODEN TIT – "Return to Cinder" LP

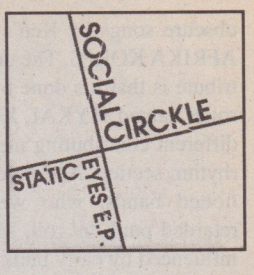
This is the new band fronted by Don Howland of the BASSHOLES and GIBSON BROS, and they deliver the fuzz-dripping blues punk that you'd expect, but with a nice new wave twist. At times the speaker-destroying distortion reminds me of BLUE CHEER, and then the song will start sounding like some lost track from the TAMPAX/HITLER SS split. They even cover PERE UBU's "Street Waves." Pretty cool stuff that's worth checking out. A lyric sheet would be nice though. (BG)
(Hate, via S. Giovanni in Laterano, 192/194, 00184 Roma, Italy, www.haterecords.com)

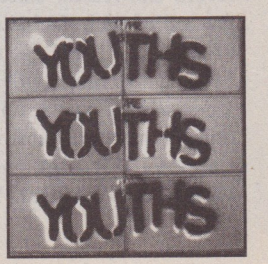
WORLD BURNS TO DEATH – "Totalitarian Sodomy" LP

This record is fucking epic! WORLD BURNS TO DEATH put out a long string of records over the past six years, but this is their masterpiece. This record has the production of bands like TRAGEDY and SKITSYSTEM with all the grit and depth of bands like ANTI-CIMEX and DISCHARGE. Some of the slower parts almost remind me of VENOM or GRIEF with the rocking euphoria of INEPSY. The lyrics are sharp, interesting, and are accompanied by descriptions and quotes that direct attention to song topics. The art, although some could call gaudy, is full of symbolism and actually is interesting to look at for more than twenty seconds. This is a really good record, which this band obviously put a lot of forethought and energy into making. (WK)
(Hardcore Holocaust, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

MYKAL XUL – "Gizmo My Way" CD

With a reference to "GIZMO(S)" in the title, this project is sort of a tribute to that legendary Indiana band, and it features a bunch of unused or rare songs that were originally penned by Ken Highland. There's also a bunch of





obscure songs by Ken's other renowned band, AFRIKA KORPS. The unique factor behind this tribute is that it's done by one talented rock 'n' roller named MYKAL XUL, along with help by different contributing members filling in on the rhythm section. And much like those aforementioned bands, who were basic, catchy-yet-retarded punk 'n' roll, MYKAL XUL is highly influenced by early punk cretins such as ALICE COOPER, MODERN LOVERS, or the DICTATORS. The sound and spirit of the GIZMOS/AFRIKA KORPS is captured perfectly to the point where this could almost be considered an official release of "lost" tracks. Some of the lyrics are a bit stupid, but what else did you expect from Gulcher Records' Midwest-style basement punk? Cool. (BG)
(Gulcher, www.gulcher.gemm.com)

THE YOUTHS – "Decontrol" EP

I dunno if they are 14 or 40, but THE YOUTHS' handle on expressing adolescent frustration is cut from the same mold as countless classics before them. Lyrical clichés such as dealing with a certain, inescapable bleak future or feeling like teenage zombies are in place for a reason I suppose, as shit like this seems to get me on board immediately. Maybe you're never too old to feel this way? This single has the same sort of feel as recent retro Euros like the VICIOUS or TRISTESS, but packing a little more wallop. Pretty good stuff… (MC)
(Criminal IQ, 3501 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657)

V/A – "107 Miles of Noise" CD

This is a comp of 21 bands from the fertile grounds between San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara. Reminds me of all the bands that played some of the Punk Olympics shows at the Rat. The bands run the punk rock gamut from ska-punk, through straight up pogo-y street punk, to some more hardcore sounds—and one band kinda had a funk rock feel. I don't care enough to look and see who that was. I don't really have the patience for this one. (JU)
(Records on Tap, PO Box 2533, Lompoc, CA, 93436)

V/A – "Battle of the Worst Bands" LP

If you are fan of obscure mid-'90s Cleveland fuck-up punk, then you have been waiting for this comp to come out for a long time. Unless you lived in Cleveland, you probably weren't able to pick up the three original EPs that this record showcases, since there were only 300 pressed of each. Including remastered versions of the first CIDER EP, the first DARVOCETS EP, and the first RUINERS EP, *Battle of the Worst Bands* is 43 minutes of unrestrained, drunken hardcore/punk. Extras include an unreleased CIDER track and a never-released-on-vinyl BRAINWASHED YOUTH demo cassette. If you missed out on this amazingly underappreciated scene the first time, then now is your chance to catch up. But don't sleep on this, it's a one time only press of 475. (CC)
(Non-Commercial, www.noncommercial-records.com)

V/A – "Bridge Nine Singles Vol. 1" CD

CD collection of the first four releases by Massachusetts' Bridge Nine Records. While I grew up in the Bay State and went to shows in Boston in the mid-to-late '90s, I somehow missed this scene completely (too busy drinking in the parking lot of the Rat at a TROUBLE show I guess). Anyways, most of the stuff on here is pretty good, rough straight edge hardcore. SUM OF ALL FEARS shared a split with TENFOLD on B9's first record, originally released in 1995. The former, probably the best and most original group on this disc, plays dark HC along the lines of NY bands like BURN or JUDGE. TENFOLD, whose 1997 *Now Is Our Time* 7" is also the second EP featured here, is a bit more by-the-book youth crew. Both bands' recordings are perhaps surprisingly fairly raw—especially compared with the ultra-produced stuff the label puts out these days—and energetic. PROCLAMATION, who I guess couldn't think of a name for their 1998 EP other than *Straight Edge Hardcore*, play some of the corniest, most embarrassing YOUTH OF TODAY Xerox-core I've ever heard. (My favorite lyric: "The current rise in drug use angers me." No shit, really? I didn't get that from the other seven songs on your record.) THE TRUST closes out this disc with their self-titled '98 7"—a rough, lively EP with a great guitar sound and vocals. (CS)
(Bridge Nine, www.bridge9.com)

V/A – "Bridge Nine Singles Vol. 2" CD

There's some good stuff on here, but I can't spare the brain cells to sort it all out. This is some of the music that lead to all the flipped up shirt collars and band names that all sound like: YOU CALLED MY MASTER, FALL FROM FALLEN TREES. The better bands here seem to drop that third or fourth word from their name, or move to abbreviations. Take R'N'R and OUTBREAK—they're easily the most ripping bands on this disc. The OUTBREAK tracks are fast US '80s influenced hardcore, and R'N'R are like if SSD could actually play rock music. I swear this disc smells like cologne, and somehow that seems to say it all. (BS)
(Bridge Nine, www.bridge9.com)

V/A – "Don't F/ck With Her" CD

This is a compilation of female-fronted punk and hardcore that I think is a benefit for a rape crisis center? I couldn't figure it out from the liner notes. I really like female fronted punk bands generally, but most of the stuff of this nature that gets sent to *MRR* is so depressing. This CD is no exception; it features ALL OR NOTHING HC, who sound like they should be supporting ABHINANDA in '95. Then they bust in with some SPITBOY stylings. GRUK is more generic punk sounding, I could imagine them on a bill with KILL THE MAN WHO QUESTIONS or SPITBOY. Impassioned political punk that doesn't quite hit the mark, it's really indistinguishable. RIOT THIS has a terrible band name, and sound like an uptight collision of FISHBONE and VICE SQUAD. Truly rotten. If BRUISE VIOLET was playing a show I was at, however, I would totally watch them. The peanut gallery in the room thinks they kind of sound like WITCH HUNT. So it's not a total shit sandwich. (LG)
(On the Rag, www.ontherag.net)

V/A – "Lambination 2" CD

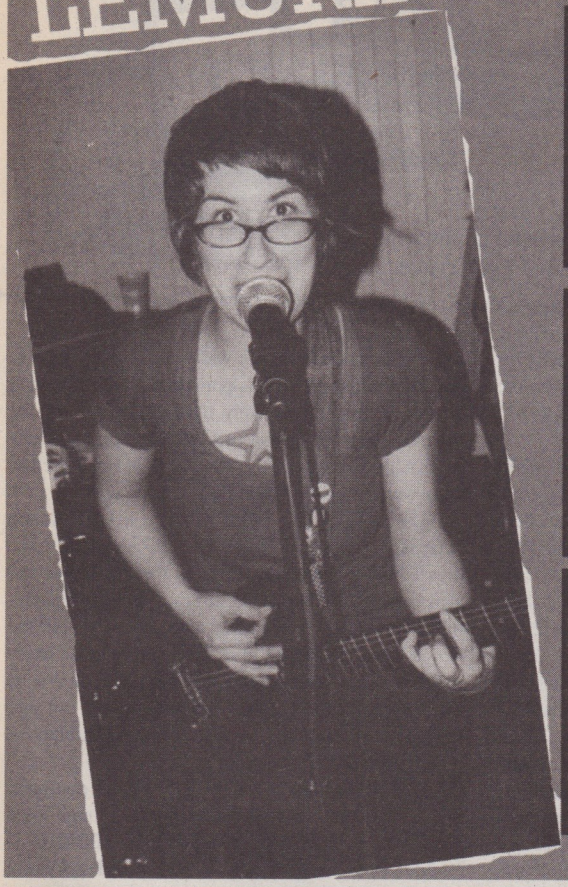
Yet another international comp. Bands from Sweden, UK, Norway, USA, Ireland, Hungary, Canada, and Germany. 21 bands, none of whom I'd previously heard of. And like most comps, certainly good for taking a plunge into the unknown. Largely on the more tuneful melodic end of punk, whether that be of the '77, UK82, or power pop variety. Not much thrash, chugga hardcore, or ska peeking out here. And a pretty decent quality overall. I was glad to make the acquaintance of Canada's GLAMOUROUS MAGGOTS, and dug the UK's KAMIKAZE SPERMS use of humor, and sax, in their driving punk. If you're looking for something new to check out/get into, this might just be the place to dive in. And you certainly wouldn't say that about all comps... (RK)
(Deadlamb, www.deadlambrecords.com)

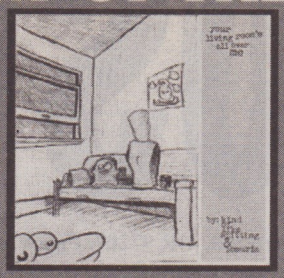
V/A – "No Bullshit Vol. 2" EP

The second installment in this series brings us six more from the current crop of retro-informed hardcore punk bands. Side one opens with Boston's SOCIAL CIRCKLE, who delivers an excellent catchy track with buzzsaw guitar. Next up is RABIES, who has taken their WASTED YOUTH worship a step further by writing a juvenile song putting down dudes who let their girlfriends "take control." BRAIN HANDLE's track is maybe hardest to pin down—straightforward meat 'n' potatoes HC. Flip the disc for SF's own WARKRIME, whose take on '82 Cali thrash is manic and pissed. Lyrics complain, "Everybody thinks I'm a Nazi." (Perhaps less use of the swastika would help you in this department?) CARDIAC ARREST is the surprise winner for me on this one, offering up by far their best track to date, a POISON IDEA-esque rager. Finally, WASTED TIME wraps things up with a heavier track with burly vocals. All in all, a quality HC release and worthy follow-up to the first volume. (CS)
(No Way, www.nowayrecords.com)

LEMURIA

RELEASES ON ART OF THE UNDERGROUND





LEMURIA / KIND OF LIKE SPITTING LP/CD $10 PPD

MRR Review issue #281 Oct. 2006:

I reviewed another split Lemuria was on an issue or two ago and I'm stoked I get to do it again. Lemuria is for the most part lady-fronted pop-punk-informed rock 'n' roll. This time around they've got a little more of the indie tossed into that rock 'n' roll. Lemuria has some really romantic poetic lyrics that haven't made me cringe yet...which is really rare. I mean, how many different ways can you say you love/miss someone before it loses all meaning? Thankfully these three found a few more. Lemuria is perfect summer driving music... especially if you're driving to the other half of your long distance relationship. Overall another bitchin' record from Art of the Underground, which is starting to become one of my favorite labels. They've really picked up the pace this year. (ST)

LEMURIA / FRAME 7" EP $5 PPD

MRR Review issue #279 Aug. 2006:

Dual-vocal female fronted pop-punk informed rock 'n' roll. This is treacherous ground to tread. It's easy to step into something you really don't want to but Lemuria interrogated a German paratrooper and determined where the mines are and thankfully aren't leading us astray. They fill out their side of this 7" very nicely and I think a purple heart and full-length record are very deserving. (ST)

LEMURIA - S/T 7"/CD EP $5 PPD

MRR Review issue #269 Oct. 2005:

Did someone turn the clocks back to 1990? A great 7" from a band that looks like your next door neighbors with a house full of roommates. A four-songer here with good gal / guy vocals from this trio, who dish out some punky pop with and indie feel. No CD filler here. Brings back the memories of the first Superchunk (Chunk) and Discount singles to name a few. A great new single from a great new band -- that is a must for you 90s indie types. (RL)

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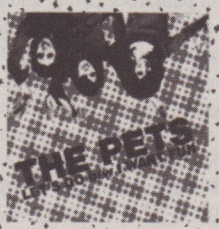

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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Justin Briggs, and Erin Yanke.

APESHIT rips through 13 hardcore songs in no time at all (only three of them make it past the one minute mark). The band mixes elements the late-'80s/early-'90s hardcore like BORN AGAINST (especially in the guitars) with more modern, chaotic stuff like NEIL PERRY. The music consists of frantic drumming, a heavily distorted bass, and sometimes chugging, sometimes wandering guitars, while the vocalist lets out high pitched screams. After many listens, I have decided that their song "Cheeseburger in Paradise" is not a JIMMY BUFFET cover. (13-song CD, no lyrics. www.apeshit.info) (Pete)

So the **BEAUTIFUL TRAPS** demo doesn't really qualify as punk and maybe shouldn't be reviewed here, but it's just so catchy and fun to listen to that I had to. If it makes you feel better, the packaging is very punk/DIY. The bulk of the songs are mid-period BEATLES influenced, lo-fi indie rock tunes (a little heavier on the '90s indie thing at times). The songs mix mid- to up-tempo drumming with just slightly distorted guitars and slightly distorted, sung vocals. They do have a couple more punkish songs like "Young Love," which is a short, catchy as hell, Sacto-style, lo-fi pop-punk number. I could have done with out the slower acoustic/piano stuff, but really I can't get enough of this. (16-song CD, no lyrics. beautifultraps@gmail.com) (Pete)

COKEBUST plays historically dead-on straight edge hardcore. They sound real good doing it, with fury in the vocals and the back up youth crew all there! They don't want me to list a physical address, but I will say they are from Rockville, Maryland, so you know their regional authenticity. YOUTH OF TODAY cover, too. ($2 ppd. 5-song cassette, no lyrics included. Email cokebust@gmail.com for ordering.) (Erin)

CRACKHOUSE MIDWIFE returns! They do a multiple personality thing here; the first five or so songs being lo-fi and kind of slow, melodic numbers. Then the sound shifts to a tantrum-throwing HAPPY FLOWERS-like chaos party. They then mix it up from these extremes, and continue with the lo-fi, who-gives-a-fuck rocking out. They cover "Redemption Song," like SHOTWELL, as well as THE RAMONES, THE EDGE, and PDR. This is fucking great. Welcome back from the dead. (16-song CD, no lyrics included. 1232 Penmar Ave. SE, Roanoke, VA 24013.) (Erin)

CRACKS reminds me of MDC for a few reasons. First off, although it's fast, there are still other things happening in the music, like a bit of a country tone (a la "Chicken Squawk") or surf sound. Second, the Dave MDC singing cadence is real strong in a few songs. Also, they're a pretty straightforward fast punk band but I have a hard time labeling it hardcore what with the changes in that genre. But, if they were contemporaries of MDC, this would be hardcore, for sure. ($2 ppd. World. 8-song cassette, lyrics included. 240 Spring Hill Dr. #210, Roselle, IL 60172-2470.) (Erin)

CROSS LAWS play great mean thrash, pissed and straightforward, with clear vocals and good drum sound, without a waiver in their anger or conviction. OK, there are a few mosh parts to skulk around the pit, but then you'll all be back to the spin cycle in the washing machine, counterclockwise! ($3 ppd. 6-song CD or cassette, no lyrics included. 1102 N. Greensboro St., Carrboro, NC 27510.) (Erin)

CULT RITUAL from Tampa, Florida is kicking my ass right now. This demo is great. Reminds me a bit of the godly TALK IS POISON. Yeah, I said it! Actually more like COPOUT. I can't really explain why. Burly hardcore with cool hooks and something definitely their own in the sound. This band is gonna take over. (A side note to the band: *Don't break up*!) Only 100 made so get on it!! (8-song cassette, lyrics included. 11120 Casa Loma Drive, Riverview, FL 33569) (Justin)

CUSTOMERS first demo was described by me as a simply great punk rock demo, and I'm happy to report the second one is just as good! Still a mix of super fast to mid-tempo songs. They also keep the differing influences (I think there's more post punk and more surf guitar on this tape) but still have both feet in our shared snotty and catchy punk tock history. And, the lyric booklet has great art. Awesome! ($4 ppd. 8-song CD, lyrics included. c/o Small Budget Productions, BPN 07, 78110 Levesinet Cedex, France.) (Erin)

DEAD RECKONING, our neighbors to the north (Redding, CA that is), have sent us a four-song demo of metallic, modern-sounding, mosh-tastic, but not too jock-ular hardcore. This has some cool atypical guitar parts thrown in that make it stand out from the tuneless, faceless genre in which they reside. At times the music reminds this guy of CHAMPION—whom he loves by the way—though it's quite a bit more metallic. Breakdowns abound and there are group vocal back-up choruses galore. Construction gloves are on! I like this quite a bit. Can't wait for the record folks. (4-song CD, no lyrics. www.myspace.com/deadreckoningredding) (Justin)

Jezus Christ another one! Grr! **DEATH LIST FIVE** use the word "bitch" twice on the back cover of their demo, which, oddly enough, is titled *Don't Be a Little Bitch*. Maybe it's tongue-in-cheek. But who gives a shit what it sounds like? Grow up. (4-song CD, no lyrics. death_list5@hotmail.com) (Justin)

THE FLASH ATTACKS are a real breath of fresh air compared to all the other schlock I've listened to tonight. Tight as hell, angry, mildly metallic, thrashy hardcore punk rock. How's that for adjectives? This is really, really well played. A good comparison escapes me at this point though. The playing on this is also impressively tight. Seriously. All the members are way above most of their peers, talent-wise. Ahh. There is hope. (10-song CD, lyrics included. www.myspace.com/theflashattacks) (Justin)

HEPATITIS (B) YOUTH have a DVD called "Day Tour 2005" in which they go around a town dressed up in costumes, set up in front of stores and start banging drums, raking things with shovels, playing some guitar, screaming, and generally pissing people off. People just give them funny looks and I think they get hosed down at some point. It sounds like a great idea but really it's not. (1 movie, not sure if they are actually songs. friendsandrelatives records@yahoo.com) (Pete)

THE KILOWATTS have a two-song pop-punk demo. They play RAMONES-influenced songs much like THE QUEERS and the BEATNIK TERMITES. Both tunes are solid, catchy, well recorded and worth checking out. (2-song CD, no lyrics, PO Box 29565, Parma, OH 44129) (Pete)

THEE LA GENTLEMEN CALLERS from—guess where…come on, guess—have a sweet li'l demo CD to shop around to all you label heads. Five tracks of Budwiser-and stripper-fueled rock 'n' f'n roll! Woah, a ballad too! I don't know man, could be the single you've been looking for. Yeah you, label dude, pay attention! They're unsigned. Recorded by Manny Nieto (the guy who recorded MARS VOLTA!) in Steve Albini's studio! I'm impressed. Most fun review I've done yet. Shows off my sarcasm side. I think it's my best side. Don't worry, I'll pat myself on the back. Thank you. (5-song CD, no lyrics. www.myspace.com/gentlemencallers.) (Justin)

LEX FENDT plays punchy and melodic German punk that is fierce and great! The music is well balanced, guitar-driven, and full of energy even when it's a bit melancholic, and the vocals are well annunciated and sung, and fit perfectly. Great. (5-song CD, lyrics included. c/o Stefan Scheer, Elsenstr. 99, 12435 Berlin, Germany. stefanscheer@yahoo.de) (Erin)

ME AND MY ARMY plays excessively long pop-punk songs. For the most part they play three-chord, mid- to up-tempo tunes with slightly distorted and off-key vocals. Although the bass player tries to keep things interesting with some clever bass lines, the songs just aren't catchy (and what is pop-punk if it's not catchy?). The worst parts actually come on the couple of songs that they play their SUBLIME inspired funk/punk. (11-song CD, no lyrics. www.meandmyarmy.com) (Pete)

White Plains' own little ones, **MEN WHO LUNCH,** bring us eight tracks of fun, sloppy punk in just over four and a half minutes. Zen Burrito says "With such short songs, you'd think it would be fast,"

but no, it's mid- to slower-paced as far as punk goes. Maybe it's like a slow, modern version of STIKKY, and maybe I'm way off on that one. Who knows really? Hey look…No Myspace! (8-song CD, no lyrics. Ben Posternack, 52 Soundview Ave, White Plains, New York 10606.) (Justin)

LUKE PEWK AND THE VOMIT made my fuckin day, for sure! I had heard no tales of the wild-ass "Roanoke's version of GG" before the story of a diaper full of chocolate pudding and chitlins (and that's not even the whole story) brought the spirit on home! So, this is a home recording of a Punk Rock Legend with a new back up band. Sounds very of "the day," catchy and no nonsense, with vocals that remind me of Gary Floyd shouting. He's still got it. Awesome. (7-song CD. The lyrics were handwritten out, so I bet they're not included with every order. 1232 Penmar Ave. SE, Roanoke, VA 24013.) (Erin)

ROTOZAZA from Tempe, AZ bring forth 14 tracks of distort-o-rama, slightly metallic, whatever-the-fuck-beat madness. I can't put my finger on what it really reminds me of. Maybe an almost grind-y CHAOS UK, with more screechy vocals. It's so many things, yet somehow it's nothing. Noise not music!! (14-song cassette, lyrics included. Joe Martin, 416 W. Howe Street, Tempe, AZ, 85281.) (Justin)

SAFETY from the humid motherland of Tampa, FL, bring us four tracks of ska-tinged poppy punk much akin to the almighty PROPAGHANDI. I seriously forgot this shit existed. Very well played and executed. If that's your bag, I have a feeling it would be hard not to enjoy this. (12-song CD, no lyrics. www.safetyflorida.com) (Justin)

SGUARDO REALTA, from Sao Paulo, Brazil, has a sound falling somewhere between their early and mid-eighties country-mates and some of the modern skate thrash bands like RABIES, but mid-paced. Lyrics in Portugese with English translations for us unworldly dummies. I like this. Give 'em a shot! (8-song CD, lyrics included. Caixa Postal 3666, cep 01060 970, Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil) (Justin)

This **SINGULARS** CD starts off "B! S!" to the tune of "D! 4!" as featured on the greatest pop punk record of all time. Major charm points for that one. This disc features three sets of songs. The "Beaver Squad" sesh from '04, which features three tracks about beavers, one called "It's Getting Hot Dogs in Here." The second set is tracks from the "First Four Minutes" session. This is better recorded than the first set, yet somehow more raw; kinda charming. Idiotic, but not quite up to savant level. Man, there are beaver references in every song, almost. In fact, it seems like every song adds a new theme that runs throughout the following ones. Like the telephone game! Last, but not least, the third session has three tracks called "Duckbutterscotch." Silly. (24-song CD, no lyrics. 24/7, 2417 E Union Street, Seattle, WA 98122) (Justin)

…SITUATIONS have a demo CD with one audio and one video track. Both tracks are rockin' numbers that mix early British BUZZCOCKS-style punk with the harder hitting punk rock of Los Angeles in the CIRCLE JERKS and BLACK FLAG era. I had some trouble playing the video but the band appears to rock out pretty hard at live shows despite the fact that the singer doesn't show much energy. (2-song CD, no lyrics. info@situations.de) (Pete)

THE SKUDS have made it past the demo column with at least two 7"s to their name, but we got this cassette of a live show to review before they leave us for good. To remind you, THE SKUDS play hardcore that has metal guitar and some crazy timing while also thrashing it up. Vocals are furious and fitting, and more clear than I expected. The tape captures the energy, especially of the drummer. (Lots of songs on this cassette, no lyrics included. 804 Ellis St. Apt. B, Augusta, GA 30901.) (Erin)

SKUZZ plays a mid-tempo combination of hard rock and punk rock. The guitar solos are present without being overbearing. The vocals sometimes sound like a more-singing Lemmy, but on the songs that have more punk in the mix, the vocals are shouted. It's easy to get caught up in, good work. ($3 ppd. 5-song CD, no lyrics included. 602 Mason #402, San Francisco, CA 94108.) (Erin)

SHITFUCKER plays the hardcore/hard rock combination done so well by spikey punk bands from Northern Europe. Metal guitar, kick-ass rhythm section, and awesome vocals. The vocals are effect-laden, especially with some deep underground reverb, but it adds to the mood of the recording. I like it! ($3 ppd. 12-song cassette, lyrics included. c/o Bruce Wallbillich, 300 S. Holmes St., Lansing MI 48912.) (Erin)

Ever wonder what would happen to all the kids who listened to SUBLIME once the rise, and eventual fall of AGAINST ME! happened? Of course not, why would you?! Well my friend, **THE TAXPAYERS** are that collision. Earnest music that sounds like it's played around a campfire. Snooze. Oh, lookie loo! They have recently relocated to…you guessed it, Portland. What a surprise! The move was made apparently because people in Portland have beards. Come to think of it, this music sounds more like John Mayer than anything else. Maybe you should just go to college and make some money playing your trite little ditties on the sidewalk down on the Busmall somewhere. Perhaps in front of the Walgreens next to Pioneer Square. If someone's already there, go over to the Alder Street side. You can't lose. (10-song CD, lyrics included. www.myspace.com/thetaxpayers) (Justin)

The **TEENAGE ATTACK** demo says in huge letters on the insert "USE YOUR STUPID MIND", and then proceeds to use the lines "Emo sucks, bunch of faggot fucks…" and "You're just a problem guy and just a fucking queer" in their songs. What is wrong with you people? What were you trying to accomplish? You want to make some sort of valid statements about, among other things, pollution and how fucked up the president is your songs and then you cheapen it completely by trying to be offensive, ignorant assholes. Why do you send us this? I will assume you're young and trying to fit in because punk is the new big thing around school and all the popular kids are into it. And that my ignorant friends, is where you're supposed to make the distinction of "Do I really believe in what I'm saying? Or is this just a phase like my parents say it is?" Have you ever read an issue of *MRR*? I'm just curious. If you're gonna be this stupid and offensive for no reason, I seriously wanna fight you! I hope this gets printed because kids like this need to be called out. I hope there will be no more dancing around the subject! Right-wing (or maybe just ignorant) punks are on the rise and that's fucking scary. You are just like "them." The war is on! (8-song CD, lyrics included. www.myspace.com/teenageattack) (Justin)

TOTAL ABUSE plays an awesome mix of the hardcore thrash of my mid-'80s youth and the blazing over-before-it-starts newer thrash style. Total guitar-driven, nothing-fancy-going-on, just pure drive. The vocals are shouted and sometimes he spits out huge handfuls of words without breathing! Hell yeah. ($5 ppd. 8-song cassette, lyrics included. 3703 Werner Ave., Austin TX 78722.) (Erin)

The **WHITE NIGHTS** offer up seven tracks of accordion, keyboard, and drum machine pop-ness. Hmm… I can't deny that it made me smile and not in an "I'm making fun of this" kind of way. It's super charming and warm, catchy and well done. Very relaxing, like codeine cough syrup and a shot. Definitely something new. Not my thing at all and not punk necessarily either, but I think it's different enough from the norm that it can squeak by. If I go listen to my BLOOD FOR BLOOD CD's as soon as I get home, my hardcore soul will be cleansed. I hope. (7-song CD, no lyrics. www.myspace.com/whitenights) (Justin)

WORKSHY plays hardcore that's both energetic and doomy! Maybe it's the sense of urgency they seem to give out. Anyway, it's really fast for the most part (not including intros and breakdowns) with the yelling vocals adding texture and demanding attention. Also, since there is no physical address, I should tell you they are from New Zealand. ($4 ppd. 8-song cassette, lyrics included. Write to stunsmas@yahoo.cp.nz for ordering information.) (Erin)

XTRA VOMIT plays political, sloppy, lo-fi hardcore that reminds me more of basement show sound quality than anything else. This is a one-man band project, so I think that capturing the live show lo-fi quality was impressive. The vocals are well annunciated, but also have a touch of Jake Filth screaming going on, and once in a while the deep voiced shout kicks in. There's also a CRESS cover. (12-song cassette, lyric booklet included! 306 1/2 N. 5th St., Grand Haven, MI 49417. pullupmysocks@riseup.net) (Erin)

YOKOHAMA HOOKS are mid-tempo electro pop, but I think they're creating the sound with regular ol' guitars and not a keyboard in sight! They've got a new wave feel, but also a late-'70s New York kind of harshness, especially because the vocals have a really cool high-pitched yet tough tone to them, but also sometimes sound like the woman from ROMEO VOID. Cool! ($5 ppd. 5-song CD, no lyrics included. c/o Doe Hawkes, 1523 W. Wilson, Spokane, WA 99201.) (Erin)

THE YOUNGER LOVERS play the catchiest energetic pop songs, featuring hand-claps, multiple layers of vocals, mostly male and a titch of female, and great lyrics. It should be no surprise, because this is the mostly one-man-band project of always-ready-to-dance-and-get-down Brontez. So, then it's no surprise either that it's also sexy and fun. I bet this will see vinyl soon, hopefully before I wear out this CD, so keep an eye out. Awesome. (7-song CD, no lyrics included. 51-A McCoppin St., San Francisco, CA 94103.) (Erin)

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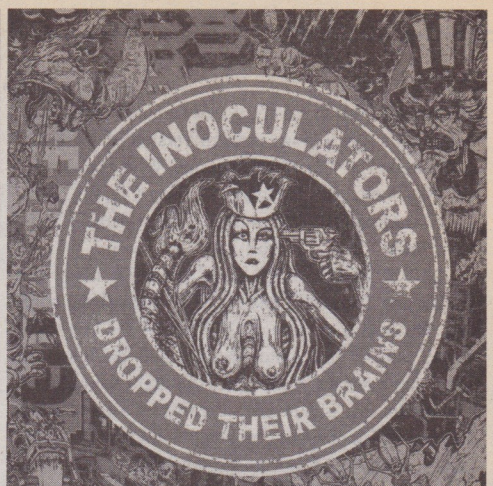

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ZINES

Reviews by: Ariel Awesome (AA), Julia Booze (JB), Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Cassie Harwood (CH), Chris Hubbard (CS), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

AMERICA? #14 / $1
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 68 pgs
If I never had to read another "tour diary" zine, I don't think I would cry. Even worse is when the writer tries to make it more than a diary and turn it into meaningful prose. It rarely works, and often comes off as annoying at best, and at worst, elitist or self-aggrandizing. What I am wondering is, what do these type of zines have to offer their readers? There's really no information about the lives of the people met in other countries or cultures, or the histories of cities or landmarks visited. Rather, the trip seems to be more about validating the writer's own feelings about travel. If you love tour diaries, you may in fact enjoy this, but it was, as they say, not my cup of tea. (MD).
Travis Fristoe / PO Box 13077 / Gainesville, FL 32604-1077

ANGRY, YOUNG, + POOR'S MISPENT YOUTH #2 / free
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
These dudes are in jail. They handwrote this thing and then drew some pictures. There are two comics I liked, also some rhymes (you know, they got that flow, I was writin' reviews before you'd been to a show), poetry, calls for unity, etc. I believe there is an audience for this material, mostly among other incarcerated types and their supporters. So yeah, two good comics, and it's free to everyone. (JM)
c/o South Chicago ABC Zine Distro / PO Box 721 / Homewood, IL 60430

BOOTS & KITTY # 3 / free or trade
4.25 x 5-5 – copied – 100 pgs
Reaaaaallly sloppy, diary entry style comics with three panels per day a la *Snakepit*; it reminds me of eating a stick of butter while checking my email. Actually, it's more like eating pop rocks while listening to my cell phone messages from my girlfriend who hates me. There's moments of stupidity and moments of snot-nosed teen boredom and ricidulousity, and pieces of every single day of this kid's life for like, three months. What I really appreciate is the chore of it, imagining sitting down every day and drawing. And props for saying "fuck myspace." (JB)
Boots / PO Box 313 / Newtown, ND 58763
jessebob9@yahoo.com

DOLL #234 / $5?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 140 pgs
If I ever get around to making a "to do" list, somewhere near the top will be "learn Japanese." Why? So I can read *Doll*, dumbass. Issue #234 of *Doll* includes an article on Belgian punk from the '70s, as well as a million other articles, interviews, record and show reviews, and photos (awesome in both b & w and color), shit, even the *ads* look awesome. Okay, fuck it, I'm gonna start learning Japanese tomorrow. (AS)
No. 303 Aota Bldg. / 3-1-9, Kita / Kohenji Suginami-Ku Tokyo / Japan
hensyu@doll-mag.co.jp

EARTH'S FINAL WARNING #3 / free or trade
8.5 x 11.5 – copied – 26 pgs
I was excited to check this out after it came in an envelope with a return address from Qatar (!), but actually the zine and its author, Ferdie, are Filippino; he recently moved to Qatar (I assume for work, not for the massive, thriving punk scene there). *Earth's Final Warning* is a self-described "punk, Oi, ska, mod zine." The layout is pretty basic and a good deal of the content and images seems to have been taken off the internet, so the quality is a bit spotty. The author's enthusiasm is a plus, though I was turned off by his use of the word "faggot" in the reviews section. Other content here includes articles on John Lydon, racism (from a communist prospective), having children, and the working class, and interviews with Sick of Society ("South Florida Oi-core"), the Spaceflower ("one of the best ska bands in the Philippines"), the Superflirt (more Filippino ska), and Mobster Manila (I'm not really sure). The zine ends with a weird full-page ad for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, including a picture of the Beatles in their psychedelic "moustache" period. (CS)
Ferdie & Josephine Dulce-Lindayen / WH-MR c/o HMC / PO Box 3050 / Doha, Qatar
skaferds@yahoo.com

EQUALIZING DISTORT Volume 6, Issue 8 / $?
8.5 x 11 – copied – 24 pgs
\As many of you know, this is the newsletter fanzine version of a hardcore punk radio show of the same name on CIUT 89.5FM in Toronto, Canada. As always, I started with the back and move to the front of this zine—I can't help it, I'm a sucker for their punk "rumor mill" and for their well-written record reviews. The rumor mill, by the way,

is more rumors about records and tours than, like, catty gossip. In this issue, there are also interviews with Angels, Saints, and Heroes and DJ Rodney Wall. I have to admit that I found these interviews a little less interesting than some of the others this zine has featured over the years. At any rate, I always enjoy getting *Equalizing Distort* for review, as it is a solid way to spend a bus ride or kill half an hour on any given afternoon. (GN)
Equalizing-X-Distort / 21 Foundry Avenue, Unit 5 / Toronto, ON / M6H 4K7 / Canada
equalizingXdistort@ciut.fm

FROM IDLE HAND THE DEVIL'S WORK: (RADICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF HALLOWEEN) #1 / $3
8.75 x 7 – copied – 32 pgs
I was pleasantly surprised by both of the zines I got this month. Call me jaded, but I was definitely dreading reading both the "radical interpretation of Halloween" and the pirate zine that Dave put out. While there is some stuff about how cool it would be to dress up as a vandalized SUV or a lab animal (which would be cool if I was pro-costumes) this zine isn't a mindless anarchy-as-fashion-statement collection as I had feared. There are two really interesting interviews: one with people from Radio Free School about their show and also their feelings as radical parents about Halloween, and one with Hannah who does *Ax Wound* zine about gender and horror movies, which was really neat and made me want to go rent some scary movies to see what this "Final Girl" theory is all about. Plus there's a bonus list of vegan candies. This is a very good zine. (Oh, but PS—the Rebeccas and other historical groups of white rebels who dressed up as women and/or native people were seriously not as cool as everybody thinks, sure they had some good points but they were also rapists and even given historical context that's not okay.) (TW)
captainmissionismycopilot@hotmail.com
anarchistpirates.blogspot.com

GET OFF YOUR ASS #1 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 24 pgs
So, this is a pretty typical high school boredom zine. Typical in that it includes a random hodge podge of thoughts produced by some punk weirdos while stewing in the banality of their teenage years. Not a lot of long-form content, but rather a bunch of odds, ends, and semi-manifestos. The overall tone of the zine is charming and playful, the cut and paste layout is familiar and classic and I'm sure this was really fun to put together, but for next time I would like to see some more substantial content from this zine. This is OK, with potential to be better. (GN)
getoffyrass@gmail.com

THE INNER SWINE volume 12, #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 64 pgs.
The first time or two that I read *The Inner Swine,* I admit that I was kind of amused by it. Editor Jeff Somers has a way with tone that most personal zine writers are unable to approach, but his humor (and subject matter) is kind of like *Seinfeld*. Just as *Seinfeld* is a show about nothing, *The Inner Swine* is a zine about nothing, covering topics like packing up and moving and pointless trips to Alaska. I'll be the first to admit that observational humor has its place, but I can't help feeling a little uneasy when I read this zine. I think it's because it reminds me so much of the sort of column written in my high school newspaper by slightly clever, joke-y nerds. There's sort of a wink-wink nudge-nudge "*aren't I funny?!?*" lack of subtlety that permeates the whole thing, and turns it stale pretty quickly. *The Inner Swine* is worth a look, but might not be worth a second look. (AS)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ 07030

KING CAT COMICS #67 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
This has always been one of my favorite comic zines—great, simple (and even cute) graphic style, and sad, wistful stories that put a lump in the back of your throat. I had no idea that John was living in SF for a few years (the Bay Area is well represented in the stories within this issue). Excellent. (MD)
PO Box 18888 / Denver, CO 80218

MOVE YOUR ASS cislo 14, vyslo 16(?!) / free + postage
8.5 x 11 – printed – 56 pgs – Czech
This "punk, hardcore, crust, ska & oi! fanzine" from covers the international punk scene and contains interviews with Ignite, Seein Red, Demarche, and Czech bands such as Xanyzx (c'mon, you know Xanyzx, don't you?). Its format is much like *MRR*, et al (columns, interviews, lots of reviews), and despite the glossy cover the look and feel is a little more stripped down to the basics, making it punk looking but readable. Lots of coverage of anti-racist bands and organizations in the Czech Republic. Seems well worth the price…it is *zdarma* after all!
Jan Kovar / PO Box 18 / Chrastava / 463 31 / Czech Republic
moveyourass@seznam.cz

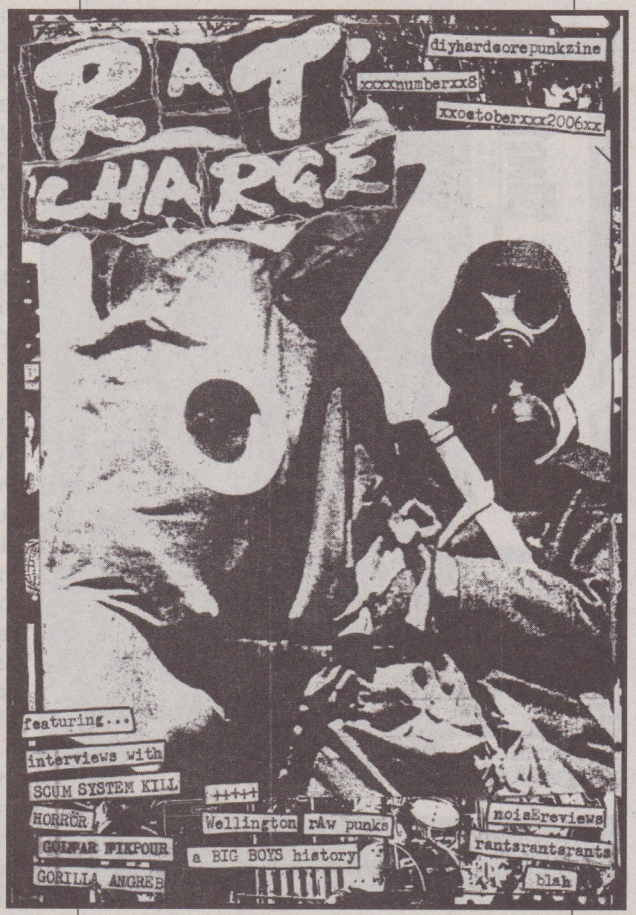
MY BRAIN HURTS #5 / $3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Well, what do you know? A well drawn comic zine about the (mis)adventures of a queer punk teenager in New York. This zine reads a little more like sensationalized soap opera than slice of real life, but it's a nice change if your sick of reading the perzines of people with boring ass lives. I am a little annoyed that I got dropped into the

middle of a drama I knew nothing about and the zine ended before I really cared about the characters or anything was resolved. But, I have a feeling I'll pick up the next issue just to see how things pan out. (AA)
287 Ocean Ave #40, Brooklyn, NY, 11225
www.lizbaillie.com

NEW TO EVERYTHING #5 / $1
5 x 6 – copied – 44 pgs
I can't really find any faults in this zine—the writing isn't bad, the content isn't boring—but it's equally difficult to find anything that stands out in it. I do appreciate a zine typed on a typewriter, but I wished that the stories were a little more developed. Most of the stories are about life, traveling, parents, and relationships with places, but none of the stories really stick in your head. (CR)
Leanne / PO Box 10713 / Pittsburgh, PA 15203
leanne@scissorpress.com

NOBODY CAN EAT 50 EGGS #25-26 / free?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 36 pgs
At first glance, this comic feels like a series of tediously sarcastic advertisements, the kind that take it too far; while reading you find yourself being led by a ghost dressed as a punchline, down ever-darkening hallways going deeper into a castle called Excessive Minutia Ruins the Funny. The architect lets you in on the secrets of how to become a mad scientist (with several paragraphs about perfecting the evil laugh) and a quiz on what kind of criminal you are. Through this door you'll find out about alcoholic alligators, and that way is the get rich easy lounge. But if you skip the details, there's some good shit and the drawings have a goofy and sloppy style that kind of reminds me of the illustrations to Kurt Vonnegut novels. Also, here and there Dude takes it really casually with the "mature content" but it's *lighthearted* female belittlement. (JB)
Steve Steiner / 445 1/2 Randolph St / Meadville, PA 16335
eat_50_eggs@hotmail.com

NOBODY CAN EAT 50 EGGS #27-28 / free?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
Quite unlike the last few issues (see above review) this comic turned into a more personal account of the days of the artist's life. Without the intentional humor it's a lot more interesting. Once you start to get used to a character you have a chance to care about what happens to him, start to wonder if he'll blow his brains out at work, if he'll ever live in the same town as his girlfriend or if he'll freak out and break up with her. If you like goofy, ironic whimsy then get the earlier



issues. If you are more into narratives and impressions of people's lives you'll like the later stuff better. (JB)
Steve Steiner / 445 1/2 Randolph St. / Meadville, PA 16335
eat_50_eggs@hotmail.com

NO POTENTIAL THREAT #1 / $?
8.5 x 11.5 – copied – 4 pgs
This is a short "newsletter" from the same guy who does the *Earth's Final Warning* zine (reviewed above). You get some news bulletins apparently taken from the web, a piece on Malaysian skinhead band the Socialist where they decide that actually they're "not gonna tell the people about our history rite now" (needless to say, it's a brief article), and several columns on topics including the S.H.A.R.P. movement (SkinHeads Against Racial Prejudice) and Krishna consciousness (!). Needless to say, it's a lot going on for a four-page zine. (CS)
Ferdie & Josephine Dulce-Lindayen / WH-MR c/o HMC / PO Box 3050 / Doha, Qatar
skaferds@yahoo.com

NO QUARTER (AN ANARCHIST ZINE ABOUT PIRATES) #1 / $3
8.75 x 7 – copied – 42pgs
So, I kinda think the pirates thing is played out. I know, we all love fucking shit up and not getting caught, but I just can't get behind pirates the way I used to. I mean, anarcho utopias aside, they were involved in a lot of raping and enslaving of people, and while I agree with the arguments that the author voiced about how the state at that time was even *more* about exploiting people who were not white dudes, the whole deal needs to be examined with an eye on more than just empires bad, idealized pirates good. Anyway, as in Dave's Halloween zine (also reviewed this issue) there is a *lot* of good writing here, including an interview with people from Nabat Books and AK Press, and a reprint of a pamphlet about Libertatia (the "pirate utopia"), which may or may not have been written by Daniel Defoe. I would definitely recommend this. (TW)
captainmissionismycopilot@hotmail.com
anarchistpirates.blogspot.com

RADIATION SICKNESS #2 / $?
8.5 x 11 – copied – 16 pgs
The cover of *Radiation Sickness* #2 features awesome cover art, the kind of thing I'd imagine a high school punker (or metalhead) might doodle on his or her notepad while sitting bored in 5th period biology class—I can't really describe it, but it's definitely "punk as fuck." Inside, I found a cool little cut 'n' paste hardcore zine, featuring interviews with Forca Macabra, Lebenden Toten, and Auktion, plus records reviews and other miscellaneous writing. The layout makes it a *little* hard to read sometimes, but in general the content is good so it's worth the effort. Unfortunately my copy here is missing (at least) one page, so be sure to hassle Jim for a complete issue when you track down your copy. (CS)
Jim F / PO Box 231004 / Boston, MA 02123
masterburner83@yahoo.com

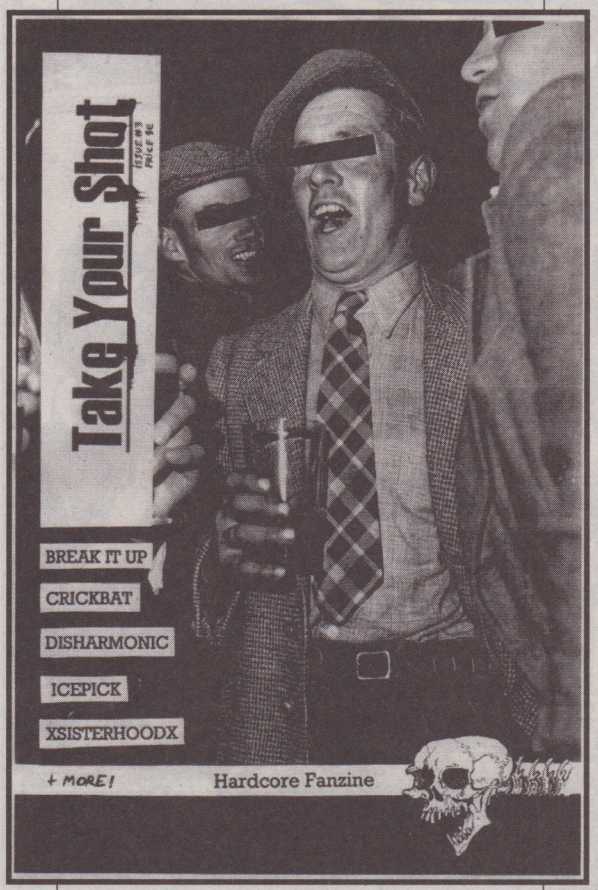
RAT CHARGE #8 / $3 or trade
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 44 pgs
Holy shit is all I can say. This zine is right up my alley! Total cut and paste early '90s style punk/crust zine complete with gas-

mask wearing horse on the cover. This issue includes: Scum System Kill, Horror, Gorilla Angreb, Big Boys, Workshy, Poodles interviews, Wellington NZ scene info, some writings on interactions between bands, relationships, personal experience, etc. And most impressive of all, an interview with our own beloved Golnar Nikpour! It will take a pretty fucking amazing effort to unseat this from being my favorite zine of 2007. (NM)
Alex Simon / 56 Rue des Oliviers / 91160 Longjumean / France
xxgluestickxxbrigadexx@yahoo.fr

ROCTOBER #43 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 120 pgs
Yet another issue of this venerable fanzine jam-packed with articles and interviews covering such artists as Paul Williams, Mecca Normal, Afrika Bambaataa (vs. Nardwuar!), Syd Barrett, Chuck Dukowski, Johnny Cash, etc. You also get some great comics and tons of reviews, from the in-depth to the two-word *Shark Sandwich* variety. As always, an entertaining and educational read. (PC)
1507 E. 53rd St. #617 / Chicago, IL 60615
www.roctober.com

TAKE YOUR SHOT #3 / $2
8.5 x 11 – copied – 28 pgs
Hardcore fanzine straight outta Athens, Greece, and by hardcore I mean like, Madball rather than Deathreat. I have to say that despite the fact that I definitely don't share musical taste with this zine, I still found it to be very well done. The layout is clean and readable but still punk, the interviews and reviews are decent, and the enthusiasm of the editor is totally cool. So while I don't get down to the sounds of Break It Up and Icepick (who are interviewed within), I still dug reading this zine. I don't know a ton about the Greek punk scene, but I do know that there is a bunch of cool DIY stuff happening there, of which this zine seems to be a part. (GN)
Fotis Patikas / Thessalias 43 / Glyka Nera 15344 / Athens / Greece
takexyourxshpt@yahoo.com

TO COLLEEN FROM REBEKAH #1 / Free?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Somewhere out there is a former friend who has a note that you passed to them in the seventh grade that included yes and no boxes to be checked off as necessary. Unfortunately, if you were friends with Colleen, they're included in this zine. Some of these notes are on postcards or greeting cards, others are full-page deadly-serious expressions of teenage angst complete with bubbly letters and dangling participles. If reading that sounds worth your time, you're in luck. (CR)
colleenmariedonaldson@yahoo.com



TRASHED #1 / $5.99
8.5 x 11 – printed – 82 pgs
Pretty professional looking new zine with glossy cover and all; mainly sex, drugs, and punkish rocknroll oriented. Kind of reminds me of a somewhat more clean looking *Horizontal Action* (which was shit). This issue has The Dwarves, Turbo ACs, Black Lips, Holograms, The Shemps, and Kaz. A bunch of pin-up type pictures (with centerfold…) stuff about B-movies, comics, also reviews, etc. I dunno, not sure what else to say about it. Rock 'n' roll, man. (NM)
250 Washington Ave #C3 / Brooklyn, NY 11205

VILE DOMINION #3 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
Yeah, it looks pretty crusty, what with the hella black pages, interviews with Massgrave and Man the Conveyors (these aren't anything special), some photos of bands and bikes and scans of punk record covers. I mean, look at the name! This guy writes for *Profane Existence*! So it hurts me to inform you that this zine is emo. It's filled with writing, much of which details his feelings of exclusion from social situations and how much he likes his friends. A record reviewer once wrote, "I would've mentioned that these are nice guys, but then you'd know right away this record isn't very good." I echo this sentiment regarding this insufficiently-vile zine. (JM)
2237 Stratford Ave. #2 / Cincinnati, OH 45219

YOU CAN WORK ANY HUNDRED HOURS A WEEK YOU WANT (IN YOUR UNDERWEAR)!—THE HISTORY OF MICROCOSM PUBLISHING / $1.50
4.75 x 3.5 – printed – 40 pgs
This little printed zine is mostly written by Joe Biel, founder of Microcosm Publishing and active member of their current collective. The content of the zine is pretty self-evident from its title; this is the story of Microcosm from its modest beginning as a tiny distro and record label to its current incarnation as book publisher and zine-making collective. The title is an allusion to the old cliché that when you're self-employed, you have the "luxury" of making your own hours…whatever hundred hours a week you may want them to be. I have to say, I totally related to that idea, as it is similar to a joke I make a lot about getting to be coordinator of *Maximum Rocknroll*. Anyway, this zine is great. It's nice to read a DIY success story that is based on ethics, integrity, and the desire to have fun with your work, and one that doesn't end in disaster, betrayal, or heartbreak. Joe, along with the rest of the Microcosm crew, does a good job of describing both the high and low points of running the business, but overall you get the sense that the enterprise is a totally worthwhile for the involved parties. This doesn't mean that it's all fun, but it clearly beats being a worker drone for somebody else. Anyway, like I said, I saw a lot of parallels between working at Microcosm and working at *MRR*, which may explain why I enjoyed reading this zine so much. But it's well written and cheap, and you should tack it on to your next Microcosm order for sure. Nice work, Microcosm—keep it up! (GN)
Microcosm Publishing / PO Box 14332 / Portland, OR 97293

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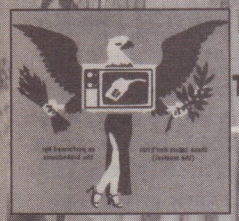

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Reissue of the hard to find limited pressed one sided 12" Features one new song and skewed artwork, absolutely ripping punk played by some obnoixious Italian mongolids

FIR006 REATIANERS - Teenage Regrets EP
First press already flew out the door! Don't sleep on the second, Third and best single from the best kept secret in Minneapolis. Blown out garage punk with some surf chops.

FIR005 OFF WITH THEIR HEADS - Hi Five for the Rapture EP Classic Twin Cities pop-punk straight out of the Alamo basement. Get this quick before its gone (again).

FIR004 CHRONIC SEIZURE - s/t EP
Quick follow up to the debut ripper! Four more steaming cuts of raging Chicago hardcore. Almost gone!

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OUT WITH A BANG TOUR
APRIL 2007 (still in works)
6 - Minneapolis, MN
7 - Minneapolis, MN
8 - Milwaukee, WI
9 - St. Louis, MO
10 - Memphis, TN
11 - Atlanta, GA
12 - Raliegh, NC
13 - Richmond, VA
14 - Washington, DC
15 - Philadelphia, PA
16 - NYC
17 - Boston, MA
18 - Albany, NY
19 - Pittsburgh, PA
20 - Cleveland, OH
21 - Clevo/Detroit?
22 - Chicago, IL

RETAINERS TOUR
FEBRUARY 2007
1 - Chicago, IL
2 - St. Louis, MO
3 - Memphis, TN
4 - Atlanta, GA
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6 - Richmond, VA
7 - Washington, DC
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10 - Cleveland, OH
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OUT WITH A BANG - BRAIN HANDLE
CHRONIC SEIZURE - RETAINERS...

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ANDREI BOUZIKOV ILLUSTRATION

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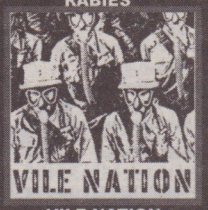

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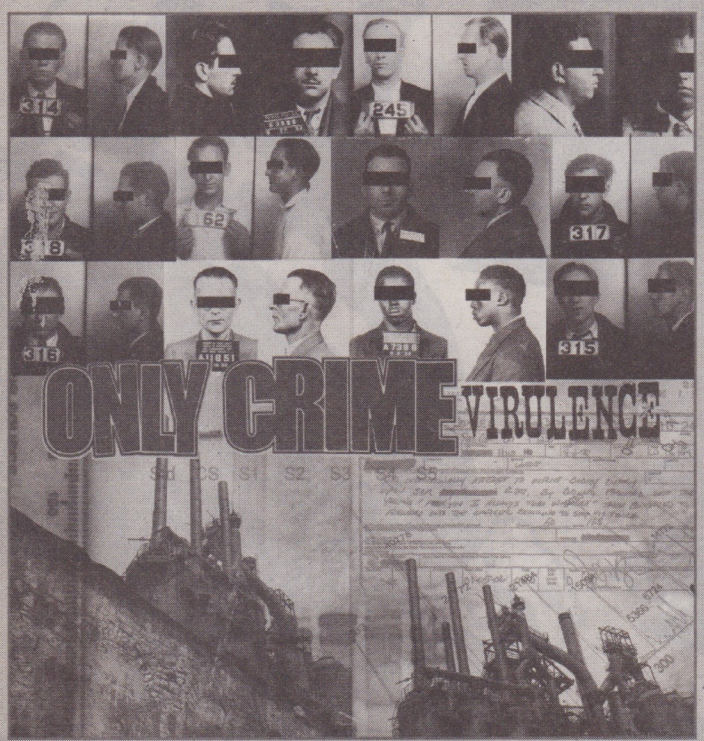

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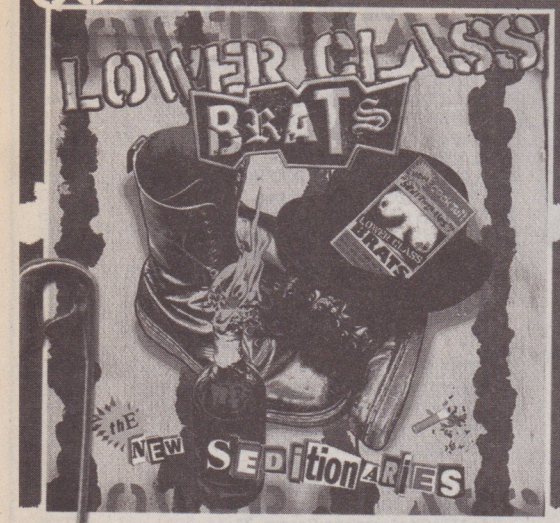

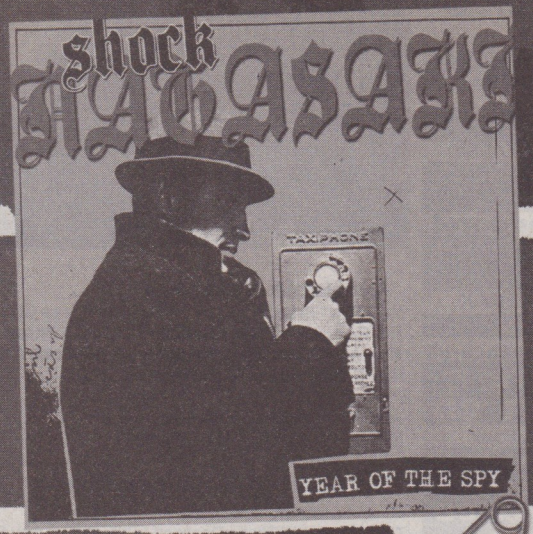

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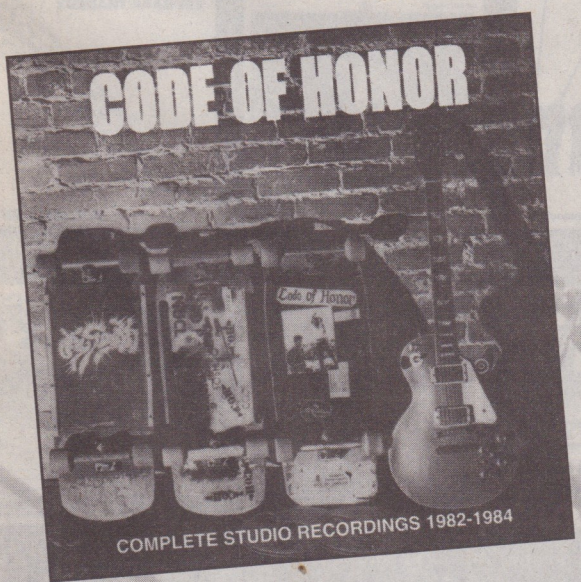

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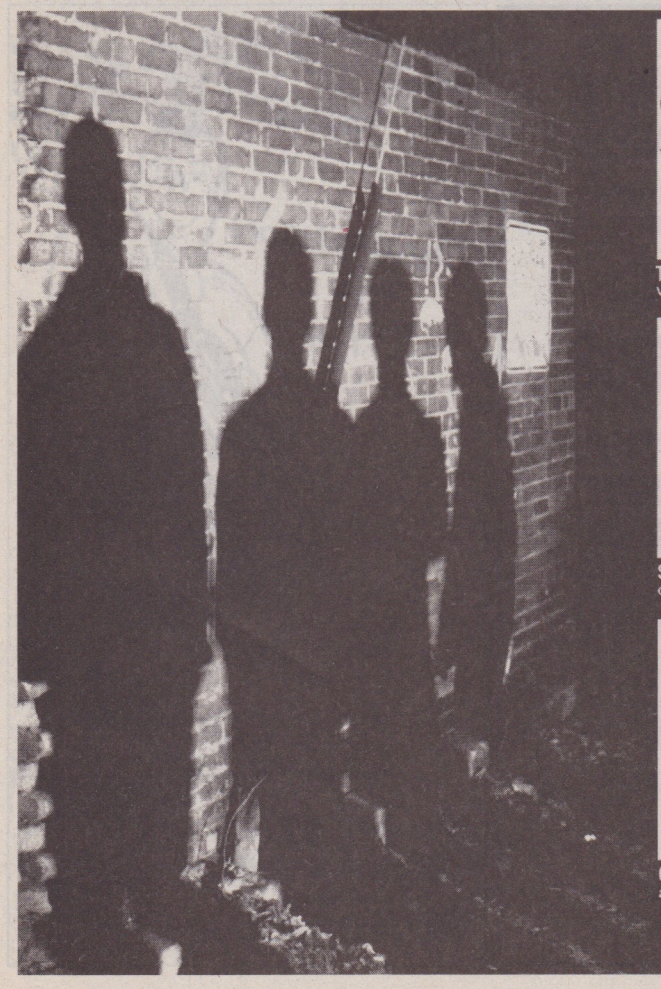

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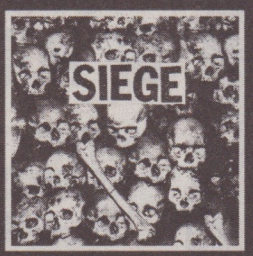
we're doomed EP

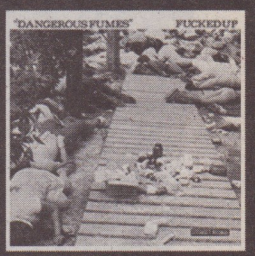
FUCKED UP DY87
hidden world DBL LP

THE TRANZMITORS DY88
teenage tragedy 7"



SIEGE DY84
drop dead CD discography

VIOLENT ARREST DY83
12" ex ripcord/heresy



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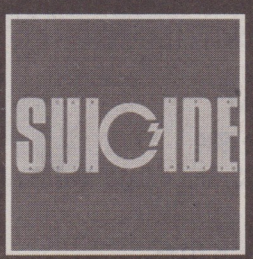

CAREER SUICIDE DY85/86
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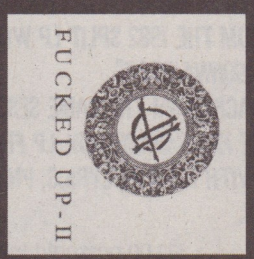

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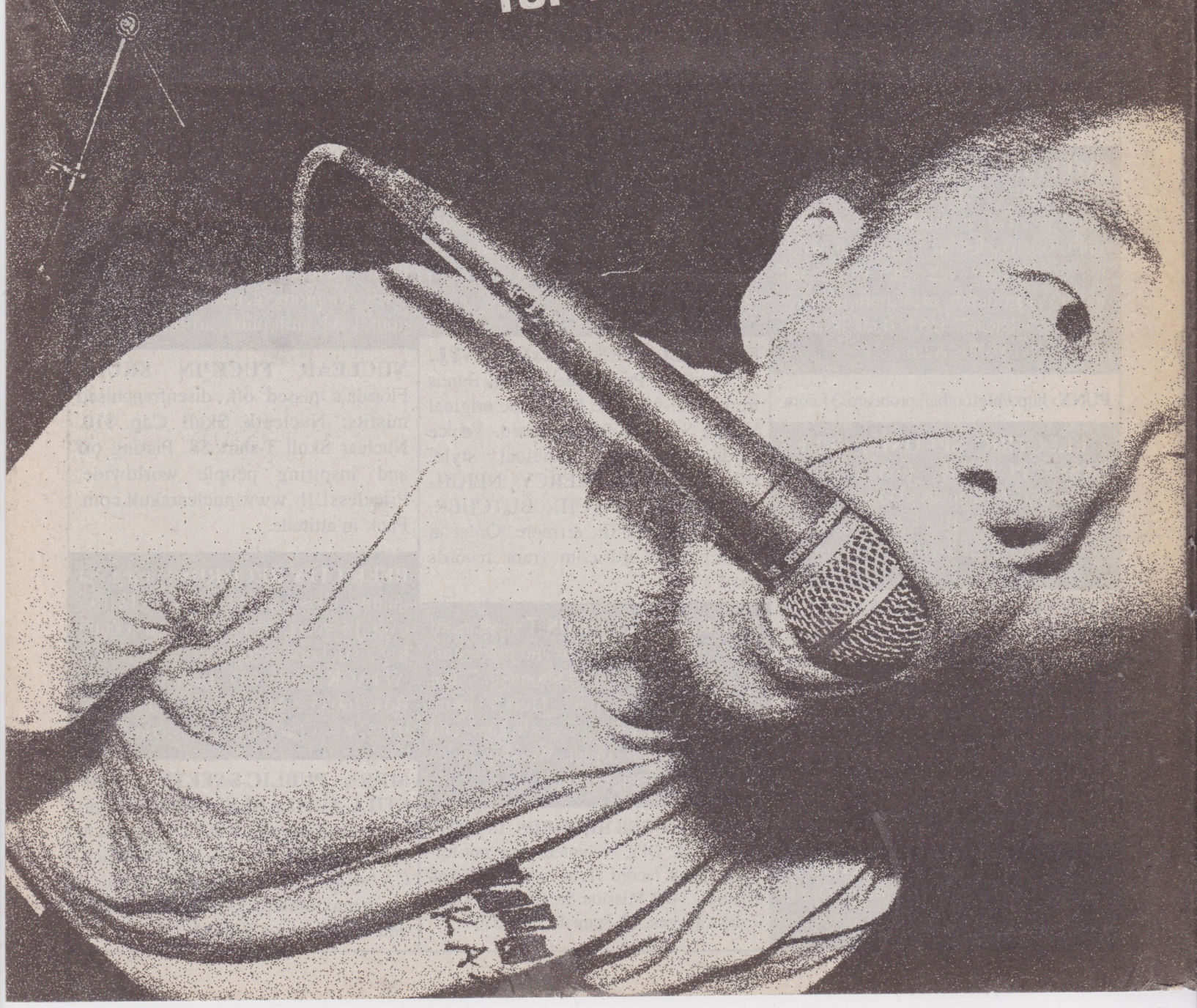
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